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RECONFIGURING THE "OTHER" IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY
BRITISH UTOPIAN LITERATURE

by

Anita R. Rose

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the Faculty of The Graduate School at
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Work on non-canonical *fin-de-siècle* feminist utopian literature to date has focused on discovery and description as seen in the bibliographies of Sargent, Patai, and Suvin. This study examines non-canonical texts alongside canonical texts and moves beyond previous studies by exploring how English utopian writers redefine the cultural "Other" using the discourses of Empire, commerce, and science.

Mikhail Bakhtin and Homi Bhabha emphasize the dialogic function of language in constructing and altering cultural boundaries, and their work provides a theoretical base for this study. The writers in this study, Mary Bramston, Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett, Lady Florence Dixie, Amelia Garland Mears, William Morris, and H. G. Wells, imply that ideal societies will emerge only if nineteenth-century values and conventions are subverted. These writers attempt to put actual, as well as temporal, distance between Utopia and *fin-de-siècle* England.

Corbett's *New Amazonia* posits a future Ireland as Utopia; Mears's *Mercia* sees utopian ideas begun in a future England translated to a regenerated India. Bramston's "Island of Progress" presents a dystopian vision of a society that is physically removed from England but philosophically tied to late nineteenth-century science.

Other utopian writers of the 1890s expand the idea that the colonies can be the true sites of utopia by moving women and working classes of the *fin de siècle* to the

center of their narrative. Morris's *News from Nowhere* and Dixie's *Glorianna* envision a utopian society built within the confines of England.

Finally, three scientific romances of H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, and *The War of the Worlds*, offer a pessimistic vision of change and the threat to English culture posed by the transformation of the Other. The positive effort to reconfigure the margins of society to be more inclusive becomes a darker vision that upholds the center of nineteenth-century culture. In Wells, change is represented from the point of view of white, middle-class men and the future becomes a hostile, darkly exotic, profoundly different place.

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE CULTURAL CURRENCY OF UTOPIA

They were talking about a period that lay in the dim and remote past, the nineteenth century of the Christian era.

What century it was in which these two men lived no one can yet say, only that it was a long time hence, . . . After all it matters little to us.

- Havelock Ellis
The Nineteenth Century: A Dialogue in Utopia

I

In 1900, Henry Havelock Ellis published *The Nineteenth Century: A Dialogue in Utopia*, a novel length conversation between two men in the far distant future who live in the space occupied by a country called England in the nineteenth century. These men of the future examine the "barbaric" and "primitive" people that inhabited their land in the remote past. As Ellis suggests, the where or the how of Utopia "matters little." Rather, utopias are concerned with the real or imagined margins of a society. The reception and consequence of change depends upon the perspective of the storyteller. Is the status quo out-of-balance and in need of alteration? Is change a threat to dearly held tradition and custom? The formulation of a Utopia is often an attempt to correct any imbalance by either redefining the margins or protecting the center's superiority. How does utopia reflect the fragmentation of social ideology in the late transition period? Is there a common thread that runs through utopian

literature from the period? What does the proliferation of utopian fiction in the *fin de siècle* reveal about the nature and components of social change? Is there consensus about the consequences of social change?

In Ellis's text, Utopia connotes a positive meaning. It is a place where political and cultural ideals have been achieved. The meaning of "Utopia" has nevertheless been slippery since its first use in Thomas More's *Utopia* in 1516, and nowhere more so than in the nineteenth century. In 1843, Utopia could hint at a lack of discipline, as in "wild utopias of a heated imagination," or something impossibly ideal, reflected in the suggestion that the law is "Utopia--a country that receives no visitors." A decade later, Utopia connoted a kind of madness in the "babbling" of utopian schemes: as the 1870s commence Utopia was linked rhetorically with mysticism and superstition (OED). That these multiple meanings existed together implies that what for some was a genuine effort to imagine a better world, or to critique the prevailing conditions, was for others a frivolous, potentially threatening, idea that opposed conventional values. Radical and not-so-radical ideas about art and culture, work, and gender relations were all lampooned in "utopian" texts of novels, plays, and pamphlets from mid-century until its close.

Utopias naturally act as critiques of the present because, as they conjure up an ideal world, the present suffers in comparison. In nineteenth-century utopian literature, the dominant cultural group--the white, male, and privileged classes--must first become estranged in the world of the utopia before a changed world can emerge. Thus,

questions about the right and fitness of women to determine their own fate; the extent to which conditions of science, technology, and industry should dictate social conditions; and the often disturbing similarity between Imperial and domestic domination of white English men over the less powerful were very much on the minds of such writers as Ellis, Elizabeth Corbett, William Morris, Lady Florence Dixie, and many other less well known or anonymous utopians at the end of the nineteenth century. Because these questions were often unanswerable or simply too difficult to resolve in the context of nineteenth-century life, utopian fiction provided a way to search for new solutions through an imaginary society.

In the introduction to *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha argues that all utopian literature advocates change in a given culture by using language to construct a new nation. Bhabha further suggests that the ambivalence of language, in a way akin to Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia, works for change by invoking "old" cultural meanings while implying different and better ones for the future. Since a living culture is inherently unstable, utopian writers constantly reconstruct "cultural boundaries" by redefining what is marginal (3). In this process, the Utopia's audience is confronted with a society in which the "others" of the prevailing society--whether that otherness is defined by national and racial background, social class, or gender--are moved in from the margins to the center of utopian narrative. In this study, I will examine the ways a selection of Victorian writers merged prevailing rhetorics of cultural authority--science, technology, evolution, religion, Imperialism--with the

process of colonizing the self as they sought to imagine the implications, both good and bad, of these rhetorics.

Early nineteenth-century Utopias, even those that held great hope for English society, suggest that a refining process must occur to make England Utopia. No matter how promising the raw materials of English law and culture may be, without proper guidance, Utopia cannot evolve. Later writers, perhaps frustrated with the dizzying speed with which *fin-de-siècle* culture moved and changed, abandoned hope of the evolution of Utopia.¹ It became apparent that revolutionary, not evolutionary, upheaval would bring about the necessary change. Late nineteenth-century culture had to be made the "other" culture before a perfect society could emerge. In estranging late-Victorian culture, utopian writers gain the illusion of objective distance that makes the suggestion of radical change possible. Utopian literature is as much about what the present *is* as about what the future *might be*. In this sense, utopias are more than simple blueprints for the future. They are often satire as well as prescriptive texts that offer correctives for the time in which they are written. To reduce the idea of Utopia to simply "a perfect place" is to miss the nuances of meaning that have surrounded the

¹ Edward Carpenter, "mystico-poet" of the late nineteenth century (Gibbons 1), wrote in the preface to a collection of socialist essays entitled *Forecasts of the Coming Century* that there are so many "changes . . . taking place along so many lines" that one volume can't cover it all, but the Land Question, the Questions of Trade-unionism, Co-operation, Parliamentary Action, Education, Art, Literature, and the Status of Women are all dealt with "to some degree" in this 1897 volume.

term since its first-known use in More's *Utopia*. These nuances are particularly relevant to the study of late nineteenth-century utopian literature.

To write a utopia is to produce a piece of social criticism that seeks to estrange conventional culture. Paradoxically, by putting distance between Utopia and the existing culture, the writer, however marginalized within that culture, also puts distance between herself and Utopia. For example, in the first sentence of Ellis's *Dialogue*, the pronoun "they" refers to the nameless utopians who are conversing. Almost immediately, and throughout the rest of the text, the Victorians--including the Victorian known as Havelock Ellis--have become "them." The old man reminds the younger: "[w]e must put ourselves at *their* point of view" and "*they* [the Victorians] regarded it as natural that the individuals should exist for the sake of the community" (4-6, emphasis mine). Finally, what the younger man sees as barbarism the old man defends as necessary to the age:

A certain savagery of mind and disposition is . . . essential. . . We see this very well in the English of the nineteenth century . . . *their* tendency to ferocity, was inevitably associated with the freedom, patriotism, and relative political independence enjoyed by that country (10, emphasis mine).

Thus Ellis, and virtually every other utopian writer who offers a prescription for change, becomes identified with both the estranged and the reconfigured culture.

The difficult and troubling nature of the position of the narrator within this narrative position is underscored throughout Ellis's dialogue in the older man's grudging admiration of the nineteenth century. When the old man rationalizes the English urge to conquer as the understandable determination of the "best race" to dominate the rest of the world, there is little trace of irony in his characterization of the Imperial English (113); the powerful specter of Macaulay's *History of England* with its pride in English constitutional law looms in the background. The dialogue concludes with the judgment that "The British race . . . was extraordinarily well adapted" to move toward civilization because of their "mechanical ingenuity . . . [which was] full of promise for the morrow, though as it existed at the time it merely served to illuminate and emphasize the picturesque wretchedness of the nineteenth century" (148).

Ellis's *Dialogue* ultimately seems an apology and an explanation for the nineteenth century that is at once deeply critical and deeply sympathetic to the century's Promethean overreaching. Ellis suggests that although the century's notions of self-importance were barbaric enough, the innate energy of the nineteenth century sowed the seeds of the modern Utopia envisioned in this dialogue. Ellis's retrospective of the nineteenth century is, in many ways, typical of the many utopian and "prophetic" texts that proliferated in the latter part of the century.

In this dissertation, I examine representative canonical texts (Morris's *News from Nowhere* and three of Wells's early "scientific romances") and non-canonical works (Corbett's *New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future*, Dixie's *Glorianna: or the Revolution of 1900*), to move beyond previous studies by exploring how English utopian writers redefine the cultural "other" through the use of the discourses of Empire, colonization, and science. In using these rhetorical strategies, both female and male utopian writers defamiliarized their own culture and replaced it with one that was at once recognizable and strange.

The discourse theory of Mikhail Bakhtin provides a theoretical base. Bakhtin emphasizes the dialogic function of language in constructing and altering cultural boundaries. Thus, the ambivalence of language in invoking old meanings while suggesting new ones in a particular context becomes an instrumental part of *fin-de-siècle* utopian literature as discourses of cultural authority are employed to give weight to radical proposals for change.

Although the purpose here is to examine the ways in which utopian writers estranged the familiar culture as a condition for creating a new one, it will be useful to review briefly representative utopian texts from earlier in the century in order to understand the context of the utopian literature discussed in the 1890s. The following overview of selected utopian ideas in prophetic fiction from the mid-nineteenth-century to century's end suggests the ways utopian literature--in content, form, and rhetorical strategy--reflects and expresses conflicting ideologies that emerged as the nineteenth

century drew to a close. Utopian novelists sought to give their refiguring of society cultural authority by appropriating the discourses of *fin-de-siècle* power, transforming them to transform society.

III

As the nineteenth century unfolded, the significance of the problems foregrounded by utopian literature shifted and changed with the differing social agendas of their creators. Popular utopian literature written at mid-century was largely concerned with economic policy and the implications of socialist theory on labor and the marketplace. The way to gain Utopia seemed straightforward and consistent; utopian aims were to be achieved by the force of economic reform. After mid-century, there was a strong sense, even among those writers who might wish for change, that in many significant ways England could be Utopia. Whatever flaws that existed were transitory and positive change was an inevitable result of social and political "evolution."

For example, the anonymous author of "A Glimpse of Utopia" in the *Eclectic Review* in 1865 suggests that England already has all of the necessary elements for Utopia, if only England's "[g]ood law" is "honestly administered, and honestly obeyed" (346). The implication that England could be Utopia is established early in this text, when the narrator embarks on the convenient omnibus trip to Utopia only to find that "[t]he seeker of novelty in landscape may remain at home, for so far as natural features are concerned, England might be Utopia" (344).

By 1882, the notion of England as Utopia had made its way into farce. In Kate Hope's "Our Utopia: Its Rise and Fall," utopian schemes and the High Art movement are lampooned. In the farce, Poly Bell, a rather silly aesthete, proposes the "medievalization" of Rory Eiderdown, the genial middle-class protagonist, as a "utopian scheme." After much foolishness Eiderdown's wife declares at the end that she has learned her lesson, and that "the Englishman's Utopia lies, not in the masquerade of exaggerated sentiment, not in the indolent adoration of some unobtainable ideal--but in the great High Hearticism of a practical self-abnegating Love" (21). Thus the author suggests that good, solid, middle-class English values are the true ingredients, already in place, of a true English Utopia. Those values are abundantly simple and material: a groaning table, the kind indulgences of the patriarch, and a sense of duty and self-denial in the wife.

For the anonymous author of "Minicoy: The Island of Women," serialized in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1889, Utopia is easily imagined as a British colony. Minicoy is located off the coast of India, only a sea voyage away from England. The sense of contemporary reality is heightened by the tone of this piece; it is written in the style of an "official government report" (208) and the implication is that as a result of its close proximity to India, this utopian island is effectively a part of the Empire. A glimpse of this island is, in short, a glimpse of what an island country could be if women are given their due power and the "marked respect" they deserve (208). The inconsistencies in the plot and plan of this Utopia strain under logical or critical

scrutiny, but the descriptions of customs and the appearance of the inhabitants indicate that the author envisions a prosperous island with largely European customs that nonetheless affords women great power. Most importantly, because it is a colony and approachable by ship from England's Indian outpost, it is within reach, both metaphorically and actually, of England.

In *Life in Utopia* (1890), a Victorian "conversation" set up with multiple parts, the Douty family has been transported to Utopia, which, like Minicoy and the Utopia in "Glimpse of Utopia," seems to exist within easy travelling distance of England. In this text various family members (father, mother, young adult son and daughter) converse and debate with an appointed guide, constantly comparing life in Utopia to life in England. Some of the characters in this conversation have sympathy for the customs of England in the late nineteenth century.² This work also contains an encyclopedic recitation of nineteenth-century triumphs and weaknesses. As in Ellis's *Dialogue*, the Victorians become "they"; their culture is dissected and discussed at length. Unlike *Dialogue*, however, the Doutys speak with an intimate familiarity of the England of 1890, because they have only recently sailed from there to Utopia.

² Including a character or characters that are sympathetic to, or at least understand, the author's time is a common strategy to give the reader a guide to the reimagined utopia. Whether it is a time travelling character like the narrator in *New Amazonia* or a historian of the nineteenth century like Hammond in *News from Nowhere*, this ideologue speaks with authority of the 1890s.

The conflating of socialist and utopian ideologies is apparent in a patronizing series of articles in *Leisure Hour* magazine in 1878-79 that surveys "Utopian Experiments and Social Pioneerings." The author reviews "the theories of social reformers, and . . . follow[s] them in their adventurous intellectual flights to ideal regions and the romantic descriptions of imaginary societies" (Kaufmann 10).

Rev. Kaufmann emphasizes the difficulty of moving "communistic" theory into practice, taking care to point out "to what extent the reality of things differs from the imaginary states of society painted in such glowing colors by the writers of Utopias" (10). While Kaufmann seems to harbor some admiration for the theorists of utopian thought, he characterizes the actual societies that arose from this ideology as anti-Christian and dangerously inviting to "rabble" (752). Kaufmann, like the anonymous writer of "A Glimpse of Utopia," fosters vaguely jingoistic sentiments. In comparing English socialist Robert Owen to the Frenchman Fourier, he writes "Owen, less theoretical [than Fourier] but more practical, by force of acquired business habits, and *with true British pertinacity*, obtained a comparatively speedy success" (524. emphasis mine) in establishing his cooperative community.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close the tendency to represent Utopia in strictly economic terms diminished, along with the possibility that England could evolve into Utopia. Social reform to bring marginalized groups more to the center may have been implied in earlier utopian literature, but was not central to the idea of

Utopia. As the *fin de siècle* approached, utopian thinkers were less inclined to suggest that England possessed all the necessary elements to create a genuine Utopia.

The faith of the high Victorian period in Empire, commerce, and science and the belief that England itself would inevitably progress had given way in the last decade of the nineteenth century to doubt and anxiety about the world shaped by those high Victorian values. "New," as Holbrook Jackson notes in *The Eighteen Nineties*, became the decade's most significant adjective (22). The "New Woman," the "New Hedonism," the "New Voluptuousness" and other "new" ideas all signaled a sense that this decade was different than the ones preceding it, even within the context of a century marked by profound change. The much discussed degeneration of the *fin-de-siècle* can also be read as a "sane and healthy expression of a vitality which . . . would have been better named regeneration" (19). This urge to regenerate and reshape society was apparent in the utopian literature at the end of the nineteenth century. Segments of English society that had been nearly invisible in mid-nineteenth-century utopian thought--particularly independent women, the working classes, and non-English members of the Empire--became the subjects of *fin-de-siècle* utopian fiction. The social upheaval implied as these groups were foregrounded as key actors in visions of the future profoundly affected ideas of the world to come.

IV

The texts in the chapters that follow represent a variety of social and political agendas, but they all seek to distance themselves from *fin-de-siècle* English society by

exploiting multiple meanings and interpretations in the dominant discourses of the late nineteenth century. The instability of these discourses reveals an instability inherent in the culture itself.

With the exception of Morris and Wells, the authors examined here have long been out-of-print. Although the literary reputations of Morris and Wells have fluctuated, their place in the study of modern utopian ideology is well-established. Morris's socialist utopia, *News from Nowhere*, and the visionary novels of H. G. Wells are often cited as classics of nineteenth-century utopian literature. To study these writers and a handful of others such as Bellamy and Hudson is to form an incomplete picture of nineteenth-century ideology of technological progress and social change.

The feminist and suffragist writers included here help provide a more complete view of the cultural context and the cultural anxieties present at the turn of the century. The threads of personal power and cultural authority run through all these fictions, and by listening to all these voices, students of the late nineteenth-century may form a more complete picture of the desires, anxieties, and hopes of a complex decade.

Chapter two examines Elizabeth Corbett's *New Amazonia, or A Foretaste of the Future* (1889); Amelia Garland Mears's *Mercia, the Astronomer Royal, A Romance* (1895); and Mary Bramston's "The Island of Progress" (1893). All of these texts challenge conventional notions of colonization and science and suggest changes, both subtle and radical, to bring about Utopia. In Corbett's *New Amazonia*, a feminist

Utopia has been established in Ireland. By turning nineteenth-century ideas about women and the Irish upside down, Corbett creates an imaginable society while totally estranging ideas about women and Empire that are familiar to her audience.

Amelia Garland Mears's romance *Mercia* depicts an England in the process of change. By the time the novel opens, women have achieved a great degree of autonomy but are still bound by many Victorian notions about womanhood. Although the action in the novel takes place in England, the ideal is not achieved until the protagonist Mercia relocates to a utopian and free India. As Corbett exploited changing notions about women and about Empire to discredit late nineteenth-century culture, so Mears employs the rhetoric of science to blur the distinctions between "masculine" and "feminine" pursuits as well as the dichotomization of science and spirituality.

Mary Bramston's short novella "The Island of Progress" is a cautionary tale about what might occur in an ostensibility ideal culture that is governed by nineteenth-century scientific values in the far distant future. Bramston projects what she sees as the logical outcome of the course science has set upon at the *fin de siècle* and poses questions about science and humanity that resonate one hundred years later.

The next chapter discusses Florence Dixie's *Glorianna: The Revolution of 1900* (1888) and William Morris's utopian classic *News from Nowhere: An Epoch of*

Rest (1890)³ in terms of their use of what Bakhtin calls the ideologue in the novel to reconfigure women and the working classes. These utopian writers envision a utopian society built within the confines of England but outside the conventional boundaries of power. Dixie's feminist Utopia seeks to address upper-class men and middle-class women as it questions the privilege accorded gender and inherited rank. This Utopia champions the working man and the oppressed woman, but seems rhetorically addressed to the men who were in fact in a position to effect real change in 1889, when the novel was first published in England.

Morris's *News from Nowhere*, often examined for its socialist ideology, is discussed here in terms of its estrangement of nineteenth-century ideas of limitation and gender. Through a liberal use of ideologues to speak for a variety of doctrines, Morris, by novel's end, conflates gender, class, and a capitalist culture and reconfigures them.

The final chapter examines the darker, more disturbing texts of H. G. Wells's prophetic fiction. Wells employs the same cultural metaphors as do Corbett, Mears, Bramston, Dixie, and Morris, but to very different conclusion. This darker vision is rendered recognizable to his readers by the same rhetorics of authority. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), and *War of the Worlds* (1898)

³ *News from Nowhere* was originally published serially in *Commonweal* in 1890-91.

all create societies that emerge from nineteenth-century ideas of power and authority. In Wells, a positive effort to reconfigure the Other gives way to a darker vision that upholds the center of nineteenth-century culture and anticipates the anxieties of the early twentieth century. Because Wells's heroes are far more mainstream than those of other utopians examined here, their fears and anxieties also reflect the apprehensions of many in the dominant culture regarding social change and a shift in the power structure.

Nineteenth-century utopian writers and thinkers used the expanding cultural authorities of science (including theories of evolution) and technology as the offspring of science, education, and religion both to invoke and to resist this colonizing of the dominant culture. Thus, explanations and descriptions of Utopia were couched in terms that held great weight and authority at the close of the nineteenth century. As science, religion, and education were used in the service of utopian ideologies, they provided a point of entry into radically different possibilities for English culture. They served to estrange conventional culture and replace it with one that was at once recognizable and strange.

By creating a society alien to their own, these writers were able to suggest an objective distance from their own culture. Because the world they created was not the world they lived in, utopian writers could look on *fin-de-siècle* culture with a dispassionate eye. They were able to reconfigure late Victorian culture as the "other" culture through the residents of utopian societies as they muse about a Victorian

people transformed into "them" rather than "us." In so doing, these writers suggest a transformation in their own time.

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CHAPTER II

JOURNEYS TO THE OUTLYING EMPIRE: *NEW AMAZONIA, MERCLIA,*
AND "THE ISLAND OF PROGRESS"

Once upon a time, a matter of a thousand years ago, the neighbouring island, which is now called Teuto-Scotland, was called Albion, and later on England, but we have always understood ourselves to be the only race living which is at all representative of England and the ancient English.

- Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett
New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future

Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, writing under the masculine pseudonym Ellis Ethelmer, wrote a thirty-page poem called "Woman Free" in 1893. One of the most remarkable features of this poem is its 150 pages of explanatory notes. There Elmy traces the history of woman's subjection up to the end of the nineteenth century. In the course of the poem, and in her copious notes, Elmy collapses the discourses of scientific authority, Victorian morality, and British Imperialism and examines in turn the ways that the conventional values associated with these discourses acquiesce to hold woman down unjustly. She redefines ideas about science and its effect on British sovereignty and social conventions as she argues that woman's oppression is a systemic, culture-wide problem.

Although Elmy's constant appeal to authority in her notes to the text may appear excessive to modern readers, their existence suggests the tension Elmy and other progressively feminist utopian thinkers felt between feminist ideology and that of a dominant culture that embraced science as a kind of new religion (Katouzian 99).

This new religion of science went a long way in defining an English identity that did not include women and the working classes. These internally marginalized groups were identified more closely with the colonized people of color throughout the British Empire and, closer to home, with the Irish, Welsh, and Scots than they were with this idealized English identity. Elmy's notes also underscore the strongly felt need to provide authority for arguments about inclusion and equality. For instance, Elmy garners support from figures as diverse as John Ruskin, nineteenth-century female physician Sophia Jex-Blake, Alfred Tennyson, Alexander Dumas, and fellow utopian feminist and adventurer Lady Florence Dixie.

Elmy's poem and accompanying text provide a useful way to begin thinking about the cultural authority that scientific discourse enjoyed at the end of the nineteenth century. Traditional sources of authority and power--the Church, the extended family, the aristocracy--were losing popular influence. Science was at once a likely successor and the prime challenger to these traditions as the "locus of intellectual authority" (Yeo 7) because the rhetoric of science was associated with a kind of objective truth. Science, in a world of increasingly specialized knowledge, seemed a reliable and irreproachable doctrine (Katouzian 99; Turner 5). Depending on one's social-political orientation, scientific diction could alternately imply progress, a lively intelligence, curiosity, and an absence of harmful superstition. It could also suggest cruelty, inhumanity, arrogance and greed.

Such a slippery meaning was not always the case. In the early and mid-Victorian period, science was yet a field where amateur and "gentleman" scientists

could make contributions. However, by the late Victorian period, it had become a professional "discipline" (Johnson 543). Moreover, by the *fin de siècle*, professional science was often set as a rational masculine domain against what one would be tempted to call a more feminine sensibility, or "common sense." Specialization implied an intellectual distance that made dispassionate observation possible. This notion of pure science led to a privileging of the expert and his discourse (Dolby 271). Given the educational and professional opportunities available to women at this time, "scientist" therefore almost always signified "male."

For example, many late Victorian middle and upper-middle class women embraced sanitary and health reform for the poorer classes as a kind of philanthropy (Williams 65). However, by the *fin de siècle*, the practice of middle-class women visiting homes and suggesting "wholesome alterations" was usurped by germ theory and reliance on "scientific" laboratory expertise to detect disease, rather than an experienced, and often maternal, eye (80).¹ Thus, the practical, empiricist, and "unscientific" method of determining the causes of disease and poor health in lower-

¹ Esther Summerson and Ada Clare in Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) are obvious examples from literature. These women visit the disastrous home of Mrs. Jellyby and immediately see what needs to be done to make this a healthy, happy home. In Dickens's earlier, more sentimental world, the superiority of feminine experience and intuition in matters of home and hearth is clear. With the advent of an objectively scientific approach to health later in the century, this kind of knowledge was seen as far less valid.

class homes was displaced by the more "objective" (and seemingly more trustworthy) professions of science and medicine.

One reason for Elmy and her sister feminists' distrust of science was the frequent use of scientific rhetoric to solidify a male-dominated and male-centered society. Particularly when couched in the diction of evolutionary theory, science became a way to exclude women and other "inferior" (that is, powerless) groups. Darwin's theory, unlike earlier scientific ideas about women, did acknowledge women as human, just like men. However, the female was seen as an undeveloped, inferior example of the species (Tuana 38). The more different the higher species is from the lower form it descended from, the more highly evolved it was thought to be.

Just as difference among species marked the climb up the evolutionary ladder, the differentiation between male and female was thought to mark higher evolution within the species as well. The obvious gaps in this logic were elided as this biological idea was translated, inappropriately, into a social idea. Science and evolutionary theory were complicit in blocking the elevation of women to equal status with men. Raising women to the level of men could, in fact, be seen as destructive to the further evolution of the human species because the more differentiated men and women were, the more "civilized" Victorian society seemed to Victorian science (39). Patriarchy therefore became the highest stage of *evolution* and conversely, *devolution*, or even degeneration, of the race could be connected to sexual equality (40).

The same science that upheld male biological, physiological, and moral superiority also provided a rationale for continued suppression and domination of

native cultures in lands colonized by the British Empire. The evolutionary right of men to rule domestically corresponded with an evolutionary right to dominate in the world. By the closing decades of the nineteenth century, science had "proven" that women were the weaker sex, that the "darker races" were genetically inferior to the white race, and that, left uncorrected, both women and non-whites were more driven by their base natures toward corruption than white English men. As the century wore on, this biological bias against the non-English extended to other white "races" within the Empire, as seen later in this discussion on *New Amazonia* and Ireland. Thus science provided a rationale for the rule of white English men over women and the lower classes as well as over colonized lands and native populations (Arac and Ritvo 143).

The consequences of this rationale, and the connection between this oppression and the power granted white men by scientific rhetoric was not lost on feminists of the day. *Fin-de-siècle* writers of utopian literature played on common perceptions of science as they constructed their utopian societies. As an accepted part of mainstream progressive society, science represented conventional locations of power. To invoke the name of science was to invoke an influential representation of cultural authority. The problem for feminist utopians was that conventional science created a clearly defined superior class that did not include them, yet science seemed undeniably connected to the future. For feminists who wanted the future to hold better things for women, the place of science in that future had to be resolved. For women to participate in a progressive society, either they or science must undergo profound

change. Because these utopians didn't see women as the problem, society and the scientific values that supported it must then change. It was necessary to marginalize and discredit the conventional scientific discourse and values of the late nineteenth century in a more utopian future. At the same time, because science was already accepted in circles of power and influence in the nineteenth century, it was necessary to confront the ways that scientific discourse and values were used. To employ science in the service of a more equitable society was to put that society, with its egalitarian impulses, above reproach.

Science had to be transformed in utopian literature into a means of bringing all classes and races and both genders into a more perfect community. In the visions of Utopia included in this chapter--*New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future*, by Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett; *Mercia, the Astronomer Royal: A Romance*, by Amelia Garland Mears; and "Island of Progress," by Mary Bramston--the reconfiguration of scientific values and scientific diction plays a key role in shaping the future. As future societies redefine scientific discourse and values, a new, inclusive society is created. Populations and ideas marginalized by nineteenth-century science and culture are brought to the center. However, when scientific values continue along the path defined in the late nineteenth century, the future becomes a dystopian nightmare.

Corbett, Mears, and Bramston also recognized, as did Elmy in "Woman Free," the connection between science and domestic and Imperial oppression. The reconfiguration of science, then, is also by necessity connected with a reimagining of colonized peoples and a broader definition of community. As science is redefined to

embrace communal and humanitarian values, the colonized lands of nineteenth-century England become the most fertile grounds for Utopia. England, corrupted for years by greed, patriarchy, patronage, and class bias cannot be the site of Utopia. The authors of *New Amazonia* and *Mercia* look instead to a transformed Ireland and India, while Bramston suggests that the mere relocation of the sites of power alone is not sufficient to bring about positive change.

Science that works in favor of community values is respected, supported, and perfected in Corbett's *New Amazonia*. In this utopian society set in 2472, women control the government and science has turned its attention to the improvement of everyday life and community. Science is respected, but it has been "put in its place," implying that in Utopia, the "masculine" values of nineteenth-century science must also be marginalized. If a scientific or technological tenet is perceived as working against community, it is outlawed in *New Amazonia*. In *Mercia*, England must be transformed by science, and women must be transformed by integrating their scientific and spiritual selves before a perfect society is possible in Mears's text. Moreover, although Mears places all of the action in *Mercia* in the London of 2002, this England, for all its scientific advances, ultimately is not Utopia because untenable standards for women are still upheld, even by an "enlightened" society. In the end, the scientist-heroine must transcend science. Thus transformed, she leaves England to take her place as ruler of an equally transformed (and free) utopian India. It is significant in both of these Utopias that a refiguring of gender roles and of the sites of political power is accompanied by a refiguring of scientific values.

In counterpoint to these recreated scientific societies, Bramston's "The Island of Progress" is a novella that offers a cautionary tale about what will happen to nineteenth-century culture if science is allowed to continue on its arrogant, ostensibly rational masculine path. "The Island of Progress" functions as a warning to those who put their trust in a "faith of reason," or an unblinking faith in the purity of scientific pursuits (Katouzian 99). "Progress" envisions what a scientific utopian society will be like if *fin-de-siècle* scientific values are not altered to include the religious and humanitarian values that support spiritual and community life. In nineteenth-century terms, the society in this novella is both conventionally scientific and conventionally colonized. That is, the island of Progress was colonized by nineteenth-century scientific *men* and governed according to these values for over 500 years, whereas in *New Amazonia's* Ireland and *Mercia's* India symbolically and practically throw off British rule to develop their societies in an alternative direction. "Island of Progress" is not a former colony made Utopia by a transformed science, but a still-oppressed colony held in thrall to conventional, unchanged nineteenth-century values. Bramston argues that there is no intrinsic purity or innate disinterestedness in scientific discourse or values and without mediating humanitarian values even Utopia can fall into dystopian cruelty and callousness.

The author of *New Amazonia*, Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett, was an outspoken advocate of women's rights and prolific writer of witty, readable popular novels about

the indignities and injustices women suffered in the late nineteenth century.² In *New Amazonia*, Corbett's unnamed protagonist is a nineteenth-century suffragist who begins her story with a prologue railing against privileged and uninformed "ladies" who jeopardize "women's" rights with their insistence that they don't need equality or suffrage. The narrator has little patience for comfortably middle- and upper-class women who have no idea of the hardships their sisters in the working and lower classes endure. In the prologue, the narrator is in her study, fuming over an open letter in the *Fortnightly Review* which she calls "an atrocity . . . a rigmarole, signed by a great many ladies, to the effect that Woman's Suffrage is not wanted by women" (6). Incredulous, the narrator rants "Corrupt, Degraded, Rotten to the core is British Civilisation, and yet we find women, who ought to know better, actually pretending that they are perfectly contented with the existing order of things" (6). Exhausted, the narrator falls asleep. When she awakes, she opens her eyes, not to her study, but to a scene both "beautiful and strange" (9). She reports that she is in a lush garden surrounded by "trees laden with luscious fruits, which I can only compare to apples, pears, and quinces" except that these are "much finer than the fruits I had hitherto been

² In addition to the utopia examined here, Corbett wrote, among other works, *Mrs. Grundy's Victims* (1893), about two girls tragically victimized by gossip and middle-class hypocrisy, and *The Marriage Market* (1903), a first-person narration of a marriage "broker" characterized as a trafficker in legal prostitution. In the latter novel, although the woman who arranges these marriages is culpable, she is driven into the profession by a selfish husband who refuses to decently support her. Thus, the social system that has rendered her financially dependant and the women she serves desperate also comes under scrutiny.

familiar with" (9). This is the first hint that this world is full of objects and customs that are at once familiar and utterly alien to this nineteenth-century woman, and by extension, that this Utopia is both realizable and profoundly different.

Not only is she amazed by her new environment, the narrator is also astonished by the physical appearance of the inhabitants of this land. The women are transformed, and men (at least at first) are absent. New Amazonian women are seven feet tall and "of magnificent build" (11). They are dressed unusually, in "graceful tunics" that allow them unrestricted freedom of movement. The narrator, initially taken aback by this dress, quickly appreciates that "science and common sense had united in forming a costume in which the requirements alike of health, comfort, and beauty had reached their acme" (11). The protagonist has inexplicably been transported to this garden along with a nineteenth-century man, Augustus Fitz-Musius, and the interaction between the "giantesses" and the representatives of nineteenth-century man and woman further underscores the difference between the narrator's world and the one in which she finds herself.

Thus, from the moment she opens her eyes in New Amazonia, the narrator is confronted with reminders that the culture with which she is so familiar is dead. Like the utopians in Havelock Ellis's *Dialogue*, the people of New Amazonia look upon nineteenth-century England and its people as part of a distant, barbaric past. When the narrator states proudly that she is English, confident that "the very name of [her] beloved native land would prove a talisman of value in any part of the globe" the response is unexpected. One of the young New Amazonians asks:

English,. . . What do you mean by English? There is no such nation now. I believe that centuries ago Teutoscotland used to be called England, and that it used to be inhabited by the English, a warlike race which is now extinct (14).

The most amusing development the narrator observes is the treatment of Fitz-Musius, who is patronized dreadfully. He is a small man (the narrator estimates about 5'3") and the women believe he is a boy and proceed to infantilize him with words and phrases that echo the nineteenth-century rhetoric that infantilized the "female sex." When Fitz-Musius protests this patronage, the first "giantess" says to him: "Come here, my little dear, and tell me who taught you to say those funny things" and she kisses him on the forehead and pats his cheek (12). Fitz-Musius is repeatedly referred to as the "little gentleman" and the "poor little thing" (20). He is so infuriated by this treatment of a "true born Englishman" that he trembles with "humiliated wrath" and cries out "How dare you insult me so? You must know that I am not a child" (13). One can almost imagine him stamping his little foot in a rage.

In these subtle and not-so-subtle ways, Corbett establishes that this lush garden is both somewhat familiar to the narrator and thoroughly strange. The inhabitants speak her language, the fruits of the garden are versions (albeit much enhanced) of fruit she recognizes, and manners and customs enough alike that the narrator is able to justifiably reprimand the New Amazonians for rudeness.³ Yet the fruit is "much

³ Both the narrator and Augustus are initially questioned, doubted, and ridiculed by the New Amazonians. The narrator finally declares that in her country, people were polite, and did not treat strangers as "wild beasts." However, even as she makes

finer" and the inhabitants are vegetarians (16) who declare that they have never heard of England. Most wonderfully strange of all, the nineteenth-century man who has accompanied her is treated as a more noisome curiosity than the privileged scion he claims to be.

The narrator, befriended by the New Amazonians, quickly learns that New Amazonia is the former "subjugated State" known to her as Ireland (23). She finds an early history of New Amazonia and reads that the incidents that led to the disruption of the British Empire began during the reign of Victoria (22). In the massive European war that ensued, Scotland and Germany fought well in England's behalf. Following the conflict, there was a huge influx of German and Scottish nationals into the country. Since the citizens of these allied countries soon outnumbered the English, England became known as "Teuto-Scotland" (32). Ironically, although England did not technically suffer defeat in this European war, the national identity was nonetheless compromised, not by hostile forces, but by friendly ones. The narrator glosses over the particulars of the altered identity of English, but ideas of the superiority of Britannia are clearly compromised by Corbett's lampooning of establishment fears. The worst possible outcome--the abdication of England by the English--has occurred with not a shot fired in anger.

this declaration, she reminds herself of "several scenes" which prove this witness to English courtesy "far from true." She positions herself in the space between this progressive, woman-centered society and her own beloved, though imperfect, culture (15).

Ireland had been totally subdued by the Teuto-Scottish in this war, but the persistent and bothersome question of who should rule Ireland remained (33). The solution to both this and another troubling "question"--the woman question--suddenly presented itself to the Teuto-Scots. As the female population in England grew, male superiority in the work place was compromised and threatened. To avert an impending disaster wrought by too many women demanding too many things, extra or "redundant" women were sent to live in Ireland, effectively re-colonizing it (38).

The narrator also learns that in the time after this costly war, Teuto-Scotland did not want to spend any resources to support Ireland and so post-war economics accomplished what centuries of civil unrest and internal Irish political wrangling could not. Ireland was finally cut free of England (or Teuto-Scotland) and Teuto-Scottish support. Nations of the world, Teuto-Scotland included, expected that without the help of Teuto-Scotland and controlled by women, the government of this new land would surely fail. Instead, Ireland was renamed New Amazonia by its new majority and, rather than the total collapse of government that the re-formed Europe anticipated, the country thrived under new and different rule (39). Traditional Irish women's crafts like linen and lace making formed the basis of a wildly successful economy in New Amazonia (42).

By creating a fundamental refiguring of Ireland and the "place" of women in government and in society, Corbett refigures some basic assumptions of nineteenth-century England. When New Amazonia flourishes under radically different and independent rule, the implication is that Ireland's social and economic problems in the

nineteenth century are not inherent to Irish character or climate, but rather a consequence of British rule.⁴ Women, no longer "redundant," take leadership positions. Ignored as irrelevant by England (or Teuto-Scotland), and therefore left alone, women and the remaining Irish demonstrate a resourcefulness and talent for governing that went untapped in the narrator's time. Just as traditional women's crafts enrich the economy of New Amazonia, so the foregrounding of traditional "women's" concerns enriches the civic and social life of New Amazonia.

The narrator reads further and learns that dress reform was the first thing to distinguish New Amazonia from the rest of the world. Corsets were on display in museums as "instruments of torture" employed by a woman to prepare "an early grave for herself, in order that she might meet with the favour of some idiot of the other sex" (44). Further, she learns that the management of the welfare and education of

⁴ The question of who governed Ireland and how the Irish were to be governed was on the minds of Corbett's readers in 1889. The Gladstone/Parnell/Irish home rule debate had reached a fever pitch a few years earlier in 1886. Home rule for Ireland, which would have allowed the Irish self-governing status akin to that of Canada (Ensor 92-99) was defeated in 1886 and Parnell's political career and reputation waxed and waned unevenly from '86 until his death in 1891.

Popular ideas about the Irish were also influenced by Victorian science. L. P. Curtis notes that the "transformation of the peasant Paddy [in Victorian ideology] into an ape-man was completed by the 1860s and 1870s" (*Angels and Apes* 3). This changed attitude toward the Irish was abetted by the same kind of scientific "proof" that placed white Englishmen at the top of the evolutionary scale. Englishmen assumed that "racial differences [between Irish Celts and English Saxons] and the inequalities stemming from them were facts of life and that the character of a people was more or less biologically determined" (*Anglo-Saxons* 48). Thus when Corbett tweaks English attitudes about the Irish in conjunction with satire about "redundant women," she is tweaking a complex set of assumptions.

children was taken over by the State, or the "Mother of her people" (54), men were excluded from elected office, and Christianity was recognized as the source of conventions and traditions that excluded women from "national privileges" (107).⁵ These changes and more all signal to the narrator that this is a society dramatically different than the England from which she has drifted. The changes, particularly those that challenge conventionally held ideas about government, women, and Ireland, demonstrate that these prejudices are worse than merely silly. For the enlightened citizens of New Amazonia, nineteenth-century prejudices and taboos constrained progress and made it necessary to cast off England entirely to realize Utopia. New Amazonia is as much warning as farce, and nowhere is this warning more explicit than when Corbett critiques nineteenth-century scientific values.

One of the most important benchmarks of this thriving, redesigned society is a fundamentally changed view of science. In order to make this new culture plausible, Corbett appeals to the legitimacy of science and describes its transformation at the hands of the New Amazonian women. Nineteenth-century science for Corbett, as well as for Mears and Bramston, represents a peculiarly male, peculiarly oppressive kind of authority. In New Amazonia, the narrator is constantly confronted with contrasts

⁵ The New Amazonian engineer, John Saville, tells the narrator:

New Amazonians did not discard Christianity. It was Christianity which declined to help them. . . . In casting about for the principal causes of [nineteenth century] limitations of fair play, [the founders of New Amazonia] found them . . . in the doctrines of Christianity (107).

between "old" nineteenth-century science and "new" Amazonian science that nurtures community values over anti-community "progress." The divergence between science as the narrator knows it and science as the New Amazonians have reconfigured it emphasizes the sense that conventional nineteenth-century culture has become the "other" in this future Utopia. The sense of Ireland, a nation marginalized and maligned in the nineteenth century, as a promised land, rather than England, further underscores the transformation of England and the English into an estranged "other."

The primary concerns of the new science of New Amazonia are physical well-being, a healthy environment, and community. Science, diet, and humanity are conflated as the narrator learns why New Amazonians became vegetarian.⁶ Upon arriving in Ireland, the outcast English women could not bring themselves to kill for food, and so adopted a vegetarian diet. Later, science confirms their intuitive choice.

⁶ Vegetarianism, anti-vivisection, and the rights of women became closely connected social causes in the 1890s. Elizabeth Elmy, mentioned at the start of this chapter, notes the slippery slope from the vivisection of animals to the appropriation of women's bodies by misguided male doctors. She admonishes "[t]o women particularly it belongs to oppose the doctrines and methods of vivisectionists, for . . . practitioners of that school" made possible a climate in which "male dissoluteness and female subjection" led to the much reviled "Contagious Diseases Acts" which laid the responsibility for venereal diseases at the feet of female prostitutes alone (92-93).

Other prominent suffragists, feminists, and socialists championed the cause of anti-vivisection, among them Lady Florence Dixie, Frances Power Cobbe, Mona Caird, Edward Carpenter, and Olive Schriener. "Shafts" magazine, self-described as "a paper for women and the working classes" (1892-96) strongly supported anti-vivisection and vegetarianism through informational and opinion pieces, recipes, and advertisements for cookbooks and anti-vivisection tracts. Coral Lansbury's *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers, and Vivisection in Edwardian England* is, as the title implies, a detailed examination of the late nineteenth-century intersection of these social causes.

In 2472, New Amazonian food is prepared "in such palatably scientific methods as conduced to build up a perfect system" (45). The New Amazonian diet is said to be "scientifically perfect, and calculated to appeal powerfully to the senses" (58).

The "old" science of the narrator's time is criticized repeatedly for skewed values. For example, the New Amazonians are baffled by the misplaced scientific skill that would allow the "Teuto-Scots" to alter diets of food animals to produce the foie-gras and veal, products viewed by the New Amazonians as deeply inhumane, while failing to provide a way to keep nineteenth-century children healthy (53).

The thorniness of both nineteenth-century and New Amazonia "scientific values" are also examined when one of the leaders of New Amazonia, Principal Grey, takes the narrator to a "rejuvenation" center. Older residents of this Utopia stave off the effects of aging through inoculation with the "nerves of young and vigorous animals" (78). The narrator imagines this process with nineteenth-century images of vivisection and torture:

My mind's eye had conjured a vision of gory disorder, the central figure of which was the quivering and bleeding body of some unhappy animal, and the prominent accessories, some brawny and bare-armed surgeons [with] perspiring brows, blood-stained hands and callous cruelty of expression (85).

When the narrator says she does not wish to be a party to rejuvenation at the expense of suffering animals, Principal Grey admonishes her:

Nonsense my dear woman . . . You are talking with no more perception of the advancement of science than if you really lived in that nineteenth century to which you so oddly claim to belong. The animals do not suffer one little bit . . . (83).

Instead, the narrator enters a "richly carpeted" room of "oriental luxuriousness" (85) where candidates for rejuvenation wait, reading and sipping coffee, and where, miraculously, the animals do not feel pain as their "nerve force" is appropriated. Whether they are seriously harmed in this process is, however, unclear. We, along with the narrator, are assured that if animals are harmed beyond easy recovery during experimentation, they are "at once killed" (84), but what actually happens to the animal is left ambiguous.

Interestingly enough, one of the primary representatives for New Amazonia that the narrator meets is a man named John Saville. Saville is an engineer from what would probably be the laboring class in the narrator's nineteenth century. The narrator is surprised and gratified by the respect with which he and other talented and intelligent members of the working classes are treated.

At different entertainments I noticed a great deal of promiscuity [in social interaction between classes] such as would hardly be tolerated in aristocratic English society . . . intellect was the principal passport to social privileges here, and we all know that intellectuality may languish in obscure corners in England, unless backed by strong personal or monetary interests, and that our class prejudices are unpleasantly strong (105).

She further learns that the conventional division between opportunities for the "working" classes and the "educated" classes is apparently non-existent, because all children are educated in the same way. Thus talent and ability are allowed to rise to the top, no matter what station in life the child's parents occupy (123). Saville's mother tells the narrator that New Amazonians respect "mental and moral greatness" and they "never object" to the society of those who exhibit this greatness, regardless of their monetary or social standing.

It is from Saville and his parents that the narrator learns much about everyday New Amazonian life, and because Saville is a creative and much-honored engineer, she also learns much about New Amazonian attitudes toward technology. Not surprisingly, she learns that technological progress, like its progenitor science, has been reimagined in unexpected ways. Much as in the vivisection passage, the narrator's ideas about technology mark her, and the culture which produced her, as "other." She quickly learns that what passes for scientific and technological progress in the nineteenth century is seen as barbaric and primitive to New Amazonians.

When the narrator expresses smug surprise that the promise of the labor-saving devices and conveniences that seemed imminent at the end of the nineteenth century has not been fulfilled, she learns that it *had* been fulfilled, but discarded. John Saville and his parents tell her that hundreds of years prior, telephones and lifts were common enough. However, they were found to be responsible for a deterioration of society because of a "mania for saving labour and exercise of every possible sort" (117). "[D]rastic measures" were taken to protect the integrity of community life against the

isolation, poor health, and "falling back" of civilization resulting from modern conveniences.⁷ The government, the Mother, stepped in and outlawed lifts, replacing them with stairs, to discourage people from becoming too sedentary. Telephones and radios were also banned, because their effect was to encourage citizens to stay in their homes. Instead, only telephones of a "business nature" are allowed, and people must go out for their amusements, rather than listen to broadcasts on the radio (118). The narrator, who had been quite proud of the technological breakthroughs of the nineteenth century, is stunned. She muses

[a]fter that [Saville's information about banned conveniences], I thought, I will be careful about boasting of English progress, since what we deem the summit of luxurious ease is here looked upon as the babyhood of true civilization (118).

If Corbett's Utopia highlights the importance of a changed science to gender equity and the solution of social problems, then Amelia Garland Mears's⁸ 1895

⁷ This projected scenario prefigures E. M. Forester's 1928 short story, "The Machine Stops," in which the mechanism which has protected, cared for, and isolated human beings for generations in climate controlled rooms, accessible only electronically, suddenly stops. When the machine grinds to a halt, men and women are not physically or emotionally fit enough to deal with life without the machine.

⁸ Mears is an elusive figure. She was primarily a poet of romantic tales, with a strong interest in Celtic history and legend. In an introduction to a Mears novel called *The Story of a Trust*, which traces the fortunes of a young woman, she is called by one reviewer "the Poet of Love and Nature." Her father, John Garland, was a teacher whose family "distinguished themselves in the India Mutiny" (viii). Mears's mother

Utopia, *Mercia: The Astronomer Royal, A Romance*, emphasizes even more strongly the damage done to a culture when scientific values are held in opposition to values that celebrate intuition, sensuality, and feminine potential.

Mercia conflates two conventionally opposed ideologies--science and mysticism--and reimagines society in a way that allows these resisting ideologies to complement one another. Mears presents a female protagonist who is a scientist in the England of 2002, and who incorporates the mystical and the sensual aspects of her nature into her rational sense of self instead of "choosing" one over the other. In so doing, she, like the narrator in *New Amazonia*, discovers that Utopia is possible only when definitions of scientific values are expanded to include typically feminine traits like intuition and spirituality. Mears attempts to transform conventional nineteenth-century ideas about femininity and the meaning of the Orient in the British Empire through a transformation of scientific values. The plot of *Mercia* is essentially, as the title implies, a romance. In it, Mercia, an accomplished young woman, popular with the common people, is astronomer to the Emperor of the Teutonic (read here British) Empire. Mercia is a coolly intellectual scientist who believes she will never find love, which, we learn, is just as well, since the conditions of her employment are that

was the granddaughter of a Col. Pepper, and her maternal grandfather was an Irish mathematician. Mears was born in Ireland; her family moved to Liverpool when she was six years old.

One revealing biographical note in the introduction to *Story of a Trust* indicates that Amelia married Edward Mears in 1864, bore a son and a daughter, and "[s]ince then her life has been full of care" (ix). Mears attended classes after her marriage in both science and literature through the Cambridge Extension scheme.

she must remain celibate. She is fond of her male assistant, but she rightly assumes that her feelings are those of friendship, not the passion of love. However, when she meets a mystical Indian ambassador/swami who is also her intellectual equal, she realizes she has wrongly accepted the relationship of passion and intellect as antithetical.

One important sub-plot in this Utopia is India's attempted secession from the Empire. The British Empire has become the Teutonic Empire, but England is still at its center. India wishes to withdraw, and the presence of India and the Indian ambassador Dayanand Swami in London sets the stage for Mercia's initiation into a world that combines science and intellect with Oriental sensuality. The plot thickens when Mercia refuses the advances of the Emperor. The rejected monarch seeks to discredit and jail Mercia, so she turns to Dayanand for protection. This forced proximity convinces Mercia that sensual love and intellectual regard are not contrary, but complementary, ideologies. Her new relationship and liberated sexuality give her the strength to stand up to the Emperor's charges of misconduct in a court of law. During the course of the trial, Mercia becomes more popular than ever with the people. Conveniently, one of the Emperor's political enemies comes out in support of Mercia with irrefutable proof of the Emperor's guilt and Mercia's innocence.⁹

⁹ Technology plays a part in the Emperor's downfall. His deception is exposed because a "phonograph"--a sort of tape recording device--captured his damning conversation with Mercia in her private quarters (Mears 313).

Together, they bring down the corrupt Emperor and make possible the liberation of India. Mercia, because she cannot remain celibate, goes to India to be with Dayanand, fulfilling an ancient Indian prophesy that a foreign queen will lead India to greatness. The parody of Victoria's reign as Empress of India is apparent, but less apparent is Mears's intention. Mears may be suggesting that English dominion over India is tragically misguided, as evidenced in India's ardent desire to be free of the Empire in *Mercia*, or she may be suggesting that Victoria/Mercia can indeed lead India to greatness, or she may simply be suggesting that women are fit to rule, or that limited ideas about feminine sexuality are robbing England of talented and capable people.

Complicating this story even further is Mears's appropriation of the Orient as a symbol of strength and power even as it remains a symbol of sensuality. The Orient had become a complex symbol for England as the century drew to a close. The British Empire had acquired colonial lands at a rapid pace, and the Orient, exotic and lush, in many ways came to signify Imperial interest. However, the Empire also occupied a vexed position in late nineteenth-century politics, opening the door for utopian writers to push their readers to rethink Imperial values and practices. Historian Paul Kennedy suggests that the drive to expand the empire and subdue native cultures in the closing decades of the nineteenth century was a sign of growing feelings of vulnerability, at a time when, paradoxically, the empire also seemed to be at its most powerful (38).

The Orient as it was represented in the English imagination was a complex system of meanings that the Empire imposed on the East reflecting English cultural

and political prejudices and anxieties rather than anything intrinsically true about the East and its customs.¹⁰ Since descriptions of the strange allure of the East often include its sensuality, the otherness of the East also became connected with the otherness of the feminine. By the closing decades of the century, the dichotomy of the mystical East versus the rational West had become a familiar one.¹¹ In Mears's novel the Orient is signified by India. Within the text of the novel, she suggests that to embrace that otherness and all that it implies is a sign of wisdom and strength rather than decadence and weakness.

One of the narrative devices missing in this Utopia is the presence of a nineteenth-century narrator to provide a nineteenth-century perspective on the events playing themselves out in the story. In both *New Amazonia* and "Island of Progress," discussed next, the center of the narrative is the nineteenth-century woman who has been transported into a future world. Mears invites the reader to enter into the action without a familiar guide. In part, this necessitates a long prologue. There is a remarkable thirty-nine page prologue to this work that in many ways resembles the

¹⁰ In the introduction to his seminal study *Orientalism*, Edward Said discusses the multiple meanings the Orient as a cultural idea held for the English, and the West.

¹¹ Oscar Wilde's famous decadent, Dorian Gray, is surrounded by exotic oriental art as a sign of his growing estrangement from conventional morality. By the 1890s, characterization of the Orient as darkly feminine was a familiar trope. Writers and poets from Tennyson to Wilde relied on conventional conceptions of the Orient to imply decadence and a kind of lush decay.

lengthy notes in Elmy's poem "Woman Free." In this prologue, the narrator both tells the reader about the new society of 2002 and exposes the social problems of 1895. We learn that, thanks to science, war is eliminated, women are stronger and more well-educated, people are free to do only the work that gives them joy, and women enjoy full and free access to both work and leisure because of science. The prologue is significant because it indicates that Mears was interested not only in creating a romantic world of the future, but in creating one that would be *plausible* to a *fin-de-siècle* audience. The reconfiguration of science played a significant role in achieving this plausibility.

Perhaps because of the lack of a nineteenth-century narrator to interpret events and keep the narrative focused, the text of *Mercia* is deeply melodramatic and logically flawed. Nonetheless, Mears's political and social reform ideas in *Mercia* are significant and telling. The cultural metaphors she employs to reconfigure the society of the future suggesting change in her own time make *Mercia* well worth attending to. Indeed, the very points in the text where the narrative twists and turns more deeply into melodrama are the gaps in the discourse that Bakhtin might call a rupture where discussions of unresolved cultural issues can occur. That the plot seems overwrought and full of random references to nineteenth-century social problems bears witness to the deeply complicated issues with which Mears dealt. In the prologue alone, Mears touches on women's economic equality (1), sex education (9), genetic engineering and evolution (17), androgyny (29), sensuality (30), and the moral superiority of women (34).

Science has also made possible the economic advances that are closely tied to social progress in this twenty-first century. As outlined in the prologue, these economic advances have made the "Teuton Empire" flourish. For instance, science education is credited with making the population more aware of its own well-being and with enabling women "to fill more intelligently the positions of wife and mother" (9). This role of science is so important that the government decrees that science be taught in public schools in conjunction with principles of social economy, for, as science teaches, it is unhealthy and unwise for poor families to produce more children than they can support, since this only keeps them in poverty:

But over and above the personal inconvenience of poor people being overburdened with children, the disadvantage of giving birth large families was recognized by all from an economic point of view: for the world was becoming so thickly populated that it appeared obvious a difficulty would arise in providing foodstuffs for so many millions (10).

From this point, that rationale for "scientific" birth control moves to yet another cause nearer to the hearts of Mears's audience: "[i]nordinate reproduction interfere[s] with a wife's ability to supplement her husband's income by following her own profession" (10). And so, when women are freed of onerous and excessive childbearing duties, they are free to work, increasing the "very narrow income" of the husband alone to the "easy one" of both the husband and the wife.

Thus we learn that in Mears's twenty-first century, science has revealed first that poor people must limit the number of children they produce because large families

keep them in poverty. Then, more importantly, smaller families will put less of a strain on the earth's resources, and, finally, women will be free and able to work and draw a second income into the family. Although the labels are modern ones, it seems safe to say that Mears rationalizes birth control first on a humanitarian level, then economic, then environmental, and finally, on a feminist, joining all four under the rubric of scientific values. Further, the economic independence of married women is thus "proven" by science to benefit, rather than threaten, the well-being of society. It is in this circuitous but profoundly connected turning of logic that Mears begins to exploit the instability of her culture's discourse about the conventional figurings of what is "other" and what is central to the culture, slowly placing the feminine and the exotic at the center of a potentially utopian twenty-first century culture.

In the prologue, Mears also introduces the relationship between science and sensuality that plays such a key role in her Utopia, and this relationship is where she begins to question cultural assumptions about scientific progress and scientific values. When scientists develop a technology that allows people to take a pill rather than eat, that technology is rejected because most people prefer "the pleasures of the table," and the "soul-inspiring nectars" available to them, over a pill (30). If, in New Amazonia, scientific interference with community values is unacceptable, in Mercia's London of 2002, interference with sensuous enjoyment is equally unacceptable.

The distinction between natural versus unnatural science that emerges in the prologue becomes very important later in the novel. Natural science is one that is in tune with the earth and natural rhythms, while unnatural science can be ridiculously

unreasonable. In Mears's twenty-first century, even mystery and personal charm can be explained "scientifically" by attributing these qualities to a measurable but subtle fluid that such persons as the novelist and poet possess in abundance (191).

All the gains for women that Mears foresees--birth control, women's education, women's employment in the professions--have occurred in the name of science. All of these scientific advances mean an expansion of empire and greater capital gain, as well. Thus, with her prologue, Mears joins late nineteenth-century concerns of Empire, economy, gender inequity, morality, and social reform.

Although science has made the wheels of trade turn smoothly and elevated the status of the female, it demands much of its adherents. We learn that the Royal Astronomer must remain celibate and never marry. The implication of course is that women and men of science are to devote themselves to the rigors of their profession and are not to indulge in domestic, sensual, or erotic concerns. That is, the dichotomy between public masculine concerns and private feminine ones is still strong even in this advanced twenty-first century. The implications for Mercia, a young woman of 30, are complex, because this "rule for life" means that she will never love or bear children and so realize the function that the prologue tells us is the greatest, most important one in any woman's life. To ask a woman be a scientist is to ask her to deny her "natural" role as lover and mother. When Mercia meets Dayanand Swami she learns of the pleasures of love and of the senses. It is at this point that Mears seems to attempt a different discourse. The culture that allows Mercia to be a scientist still forces her to chose (falsely) a career over her "natural" function. Only when

Mercia meets and accepts the love of an oriental intellectual does she realize that she can be both of these selves.

Dayanand functions to bridge the gap between the Orient and England, between the other and the familiar, between the senses and the intellect. He

surrounded himself with the gorgeous luxuries of an Eastern prince, although dwelling in the English metropolis, and displayed his Eastern descent by following Eastern customs as far as English conventionalities would permit. Nevertheless, he kept in touch with the times, accommodating himself to the requirements of the people among whom he had made his home (200).

Many writers of the nineteenth century associated the Orient with, at best, an unhealthy or perverse sensuality, and, at worst, moral and physical decay. However, for Mears's protagonist, feminine sensuality takes on an entirely different aspect. For Mercia, an intimate knowledge of Oriental sensuality signals the awakening of her full powers, and is neither perverse or decadent. Through her association with Dayanand and Eastern mysticism, she finds the courage to defy a corrupt Emperor, refuse a marriage of convenience to her assistant Geometrus, and go on to be the elected ruler of an independent India.¹² The influence of the East doesn't destroy or corrupt her.

¹² In 1876, when Victoria was made "Empress of India" some of her British subjects objected because the title seemed too "alien" (Eldridge 213).

and her acceptance of her sensual self does not degrade her. Thanks to the influence of the Orient, she accepts her "natural" role as both a woman and a scientist.

In *Mercia*, Mears challenges the dichotomy between masculinized intellectual values and feminized emotional ones in *fin-de-siècle* England. By positing Mercia as both a scientist and a budding sensualist, Mears advocates profound change in the prevailing patriarchal power structure. By suggesting that women, both sensual and possessed of the "right" kind of natural science, must gain ascendancy over a patriarchy that continues to dehumanize women and deny them full lives, she also suggests an examination of the limitations of rational, scientific thought. Further, the cultural metaphors of science, the Orient, and feminine power that she uses are the same metaphors used by other late nineteenth-century writers, but to a radically different end. Mears, like Corbett, takes conventional values and assumptions about science and the cultural authority given to scientific discourse and transforms her culture's ideas of what constituted the "other" in both literature and society.

Science in *Mercia* can and must change. Although science has taken great steps forward, and by 2002 women are held in greater regard than in the late nineteenth century, women are still in a vulnerable position. Another melodramatic subplot involves the improper romantic advances of the already married Emperor to Mercia, who has vowed to remain celibate. Her rejection of these advances and the Emperor's vicious response leads to revolt and revolution. In the enlightened England of the twenty-first century, Mercia is compromised by the improper advances and

accusations of the Emperor. Even the hint of impropriety can still endanger a woman's position because her power is not yet real.

Mercia is vindicated and subsequently recognized as the rightful Empress of India after her political and moral triumph over the Emperor. Significantly, England, recast though it is by a transformation of scientific values, still cannot be Utopia. Mercia must, with Dayanand, bridge the gap between science and sensuality, between England and the Orient, and discover her true fate not in her native England, but in a newly independent, transformed India. Resisting cultural stereotyping once more, Mercia and Dayanand are married "neither in Christian or Hindu temple, but in the great hall of [India's] Parliament House, the most stately building in Calcutta" (347). The rule of law, apparently, will make all men and women free and equal.

Finally, if Corbett and Mears suggest ways in which science must alter its course to approach Utopia, then Mary Bramston's short dystopian novella, "The Island of Progress," emphasizes the necessity of transforming nineteenth-century science by envisioning what the future would be like if the values and objectives of science did not change but rather continued along the course set at the *fin de siècle*. In this story, the narrator, Dorthea Hollis, is returning from a holiday with her husband and two children. On the train, she and her family meet Dr. Vitus, a vaguely sinister figure who reminds the narrator of a medieval necromancer; he wears "a black velvet skull-cap," has "smooth-parchment-coloured cheeks," and displays "a very shrewd, observant look upon his curved brow and thin lips" (228). He is, however, a man of science who heads up the "Society for the Perfection of the Human Race" (233). Vitus

believes that "the human race will never have a fair trial until it has been governed for centuries by strictly scientific rules" (228). However, Dr. Vitus's observations on science and humanity are violently interrupted by a train wreck, and Dorthea loses consciousness.

When Dorthea awakes, it is 500 years into the future. She learns from Dr. Vitus (who has kept himself as well as Dorthea alive with a "potion" all these years) that he has kept her in a suspended state so that another nineteenth-century person, besides himself, could witness what 500 years of "scientific labour upon the physical condition of [the human] race" has done on this Island of Progress (231). Dorthea discovers that the island was settled in the late nineteenth century by a group of "men of science" that included her by then adult son Charlie.

On this island science has replaced Christianity as the politically and culturally acceptable doctrine of faith. Everything seems well-managed and the people healthy and robust, although the narrator is troubled by the strangely flat affect among the Islanders she meets. Dr. Vitus tells her that the family of one of her descendants (through Charlie) lives nearby on the island, and the family is eager to welcome her into their home. It is here that she meets her distant descendant Linden, a son of the family. Dorthea learns much from Linden, who, much more than anyone else she meets, seems to be a kindred spirit.

Chief among the things she learns about this society is that Christianity is not just out of favor, it is outlawed because religious ideals pervert "the sound doctrines of science" (Bramston 258). Linden, however, longs for purpose in his life, and the

narrator secretly instructs him in the tenets of the Christian faith. Of course, Linden is eventually found out and persecuted, and, after great suffering at the hands of the government, he is martyred, or in the parlance of the Island, "extinguished." After Linden's death, Dorthea wakes up back in the nineteenth century, and learns that she had been seriously injured in the train wreck that began the story, but has been nursed back to health by none other than Dr. Vitus, who is not a bad fellow after all.

Although on one level this short novella is a straightforward argument for the promotion of Christian values in a rapidly changing world, it is also an active critique of nineteenth-century scientific values. It is instructive to examine the ways that Bramston describes and characterizes the science of the Island in light of the transformed science and scientific values in the two previous Utopias. The science practiced on the Island is fundamentally unchanged from that which the nineteenth-century "men of science" who first colonized the island practiced and promoted. Dorthea learns that, even 500 years in the future, the "men of science . . . [make] laws for the island" (251). To consider what those scientific values represent is to examine what Bramston, and other skeptics of the *fin de siècle*, expected science to become if unchecked and unaltered.

The first thing Dorthea notices upon awakening is a certain shallowness and artifice on the Island that extends from the furnishings and culture of the society to the outlook of its citizens. It is this artifice that marks the Island as "Not England" in a different way than the hyperbolic fruit and accomplishments of New Amazonia and the exoticness of Mercia's India. The carpet in the room in which she awakens is an

"artfully manufactured" imitation of moss (230). Indeed, the whole Island seems to be a soulless imitation of England. Imitation of nature has replaced art in the homes, and the music and painting of this future is dull and without feeling, although technically perfect. "Imagination" has become an insulting term (245), and the classics are largely unknown. Instead, "those who had a taste for accomplishments studied nature-imitation and music" (237). Dorthea notes that the "treasures" of the home are "artful and deceptive imitations of nature" (238), and "of art, properly speaking, there was none. Imitation of nature appeared to have usurped its place, and entirely to satisfy the aesthetic yearnings of the Island of Progress" (238). Physical beauty is the most valued human trait, and everyone on the Island is beautiful, but placidly, impassively so. Science has become the great equalizer, and there is "neither riches nor poverty in the Island of Progress. All men [are] equal, or nearly so, in property, leisure and education. Men and women alike [are] carefully instructed in the exact sciences" (236). Still, Dorthea cannot help but wonder at the "heavy look" she has noticed on even the most beautiful Islanders. She wonders "[c]ould it be that this perfectly-contrived and wrought-out physical life was unsatisfactory to them, even when they thought it was all they desired?" (249).

The silliness, along with the danger, perceived in evolutionary metaphor is also exposed. When Dorthea notices the Islanders name boy children after trees and shrubs and girl children are named after flowering plants, her descendants tell her they are fond of naming their children not only after trees and flowering shrubs, but after their respected ancestors. Dorthea mistakenly believes this means "the old names of

[human] history" but learns instead that it means "all vertebrate animals" (239), and so children's names reflect the Latin words for mammals, amphibians, fishes, reptiles, and birds. The "progress of the species" is paramount, and that means only physical progress, because "history, metaphysics, philosophy, poetry" are all considered irrelevant (245). Only science matters, and the aim of science on the Island is, as Linden says, to make its citizens

use all possible force and energy to perfect our physical condition and raise the efficiency of our bodies. This is done by impressing upon [the Islanders] that the physical condition of the race is the highest end of life, to which all individual tastes and fancies must give way (245).

This emphasis on physical evolution and survival of a narrowly defined "fittest" makes the Island a brutal culture that extinguishes "damaged specimens" like sickly or underweight babies (242). Criminals like Linden are subjected to human experimentation that is "death by slow torture for the advancement of science" (249).

Linden is arrested by the government and tortured in an effort to "convince" him to recant. This society's shallowness is underscored as Linden is told that his "inner convictions" matter little because "outward denial" of dangerous beliefs is what matters most to the Government (265). Just as Elmy and Corbett note the correlation between animal experimentation and inhumanity and oppression, so Bramston's protagonist emphasizes the short leap from vivisection to human suffering: "When there was a dearth of criminals to experiment upon . . . dogs, cats, and rabbits were used, as in the nineteenth century" (268). Dr. Vitus finds he has a grudging respect

for Linden and his convictions, and Vitus's acknowledgment of this respect leads him to see that he has in fact created a monster. In this Frankenstein tale, however, the fearsome creation of science is not a single creature, but an entire society.

Ironically, the zealously renewed faith that Linden establishes is likened by government officials to the same kind of "witch mania" sometimes suffered by their "barbarous and illogical forefathers." In fact, it is the government which conducts a witch hunt as they seek out Christian believers (262). This irony is not lost on Dr. Vitus, who tells Linden's captors that attempting to force Linden to recant "seemed to savour of the principles of eight or nine centuries before." The establishment forces represented by the government and science respond that "those barbarous ages had had glimpses of higher truth than they knew, and . . . one of the first duties of an enlightened society was to crush out all individual fancies unfavourable to its progress" (265).

Vitus, deeply disturbed with the turn of events, realizes that he has lost all control over his creation. He remarks to Dorthea "I cannot help thinking that in some important matters we have progressed very little, if not retrograded" (267). Slowly realizing that his great experiment in the "scientific" advancement of the human race has been a moral-ethical failure, Vitus ends Linden's suffering and mercifully kills him before his torturers return.

After this horrible scene, Dorthea awakes back in the nineteenth century and learns that the nineteenth-century Vitus has nursed her back to consciousness; he and Dorthea share a good laugh over the dream and Dorthea comments, "On the whole,

notwithstanding the scientific needs of England in the present day. I was well content to be at home again." She is happy to be "in a land of free opinion, and the government of my country was not *at present* so scientific as to refuse to allow me to bring up Charlie and May as Christians" (273, emphasis mine). In the end, Dorthea recognizes that late Victorian science and human and spiritual values, as they exist in the 1890's, resist one another. She thinks often about her dream of Linden, and opposing questions about the nature of science arise that seethe

in the brain of this present age, which most of us, unless exceptionally organized, have to work out for ourselves either theoretically or practically, two ideals . . . the material ideal which ignores the spiritual, and the spiritual ideal which claims the material as its servant, but not as its equal or its master . . . we have to choose between these two ideals (274).

It seems clear from the text of this novella that Bramston believes that if this conflict is not resolved, the results will be as horrific as those on the Island of Progress.

These three Utopias imagine how English culture could be transformed if the conventions determining colonization, gender politics, and technological reform could be reconfigured. For Corbett and Mears, inclusive humanitarian values are crucial to the development of a perfect society. Incorporation of these ways of viewing the world, rather than the domination of one over the other, is key in both *New Amazonia* and *Mercia*. Gender and economic equity and a strong community are possible only if "hard" scientific values are mediated by "softer" ones of religion and social

responsibility. As Bramston's negative exemplar of the ironically named island of "Progress" suggests, simply transplanting *fin-de-siècle* ideology to another place is not enough to bring about Utopia. Nineteenth-century ideas of progress and intellect must also be reconfigured for a suitable utopian society to emerge.

In the next chapter, Florence Dixie and William Morris establish Utopia on English soil, but populate it with groups marginalized from within late nineteenth-century culture. The setting for Utopia is England, but it is a radically transformed England made strange not by a relocation of the culture, but by a relocation of "colonized" groups from within nineteenth-century culture: the working classes and women.

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CHAPTER III

IDEOLOGUES FROM THE MARGINS

It was natural . . . that [nineteenth-century people] should try to make "nature" their slave, since they thought "nature" was something outside them (234).

William Morris
- *News from Nowhere*

Colonization of a different type plays an important role in the next two texts. Estranging the familiar using the broad cultural authority of nineteenth-century science and Empire gives way to a refined sense of the Other that plays to specific audiences and addresses more specific concerns. In the previous chapter, *New Amazonia*, *Mercia*, and "The Island of Progress" estrange Victorian culture by placing that culture's scientific ideology on the margins while relocating the physical site of utopia to colonized lands. The culture of Imperialism and colonization so dominated the late nineteenth century, however, that the metaphor of colonization extended beyond political and military implications and was employed to describe social and cultural conditions.¹

¹ Conceptualization of a London "underworld" as colony is examined in Chapter 1 of Mark Seltzer's *Henry James and the Art of Power* and in Philip Abram's *The Origins of British Sociology*. To conceive of the working classes and the poor as colonized people within the Empire assumes first that the middle-classes are the norm, and that the lower classes are at once dependant upon, and deviant from, that norm. Of particular relevance to this study, however, is Martha Vicinus's observation that colonialism was a pervasive metaphor for the founding of Settlement houses in the slums of *fin-de-siècle* London. Unmarried middle-class women lived among London's

Groups within *fin-de-siècle* English society began to identify themselves, and were identified, as "colonized" and marginalized as colonization came to signify not only the actions of the Empire toward dependent countries, but the position of lower- and working-classes within English society. Late nineteenth-century socialists and feminists recognized that the same patronage and marginalization that colonies and dependents of the Empire were subjected to was analogous to the forced dependance that the working classes and middle-class women faced from the dominant English culture. This awareness made evident a gap in the facade of English society that utopian writers of the *fin de siècle* could exploit as they sought to describe societies that supported gender and class parity and to reject the Imperialist-capitalist system that dominated England.

Bakhtin's theory of discourse in the novel provides a useful way to think about Florence Dixie's *Gloriana, or the Revolution of 1900* (1889) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere, or An Epoch of Rest* (1890). These texts, far more overtly didactic than the previous three, make effective use of what Bakhtin would call the ideologue in the novel. Bakhtin contends that language is "inherently dialogic" in that it can only be fully understood in orientation to the culture, or cultures, that produce it (Eagleton 117). Discourse relationships, therefore, are of primary importance. The relationship between the author and the narrator, the narrator and other characters and

poor and working classes in an effort to "conquer" the "natives" and bring reform to their ranks (219).

events in the novel, the novel and the reader are all revealed through an understanding of the unstable "spaces" present in the discourse. Further, these gaps exist because language is imbued with multiple meanings (Bakhtin 302). The role of the ideologue is to give voice to a culture's competing ideologies in order to create a different reality. The double-voiced nature of heteroglossia in the novel means that each character speaks with "two different intentions: the direct intention of the character . . . and the refracted intention of the author" (324). In *Glorianna* and *News from Nowhere* the characters who act as ideologues explain and proscribe through this double-voiced narrative.

Since language (and the ideologies it represents) is not static (Bakhtin 302), utopian texts reimagine familiar situations by employing an ideologue to speak for the newly empowered even as that speaker represents some aspect of the "old" culture. Thus, when Ellen, in William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, speaks eloquently as an ideologue of a new, radically different order, she also offers comfort to the nineteenth-century Guest and the Englishmen he represents. Ellen acknowledges, in a way her fellow Nowherians do not, the importance of history and an awareness of a culture's past and in this way validates the England of Guest's experience. Ideologues give the reader insight into who and what is being estranged in the newly imagined utopia as well as the audience to whom this vision of estrangement is directed.

In each of the next utopias, ideologues emerge signifying the transformation of dominant nineteenth-century classes or ideologies. These ideologues serve to reconfigure Victorian culture by moving groups internally "colonized" by the

Victorians into the center of a utopian society. In *Glorianna* and *News from Nowhere* utopia can develop on English soil. Unlike visions of England as utopia earlier in the century, however, this is an England radically transformed in terms of who is at the center of utopian civilization and government and in terms of the values held by the majority.

The two segments of English society that are particularly important to these utopian visions are women and the working classes. Middle-class women and working-class men, marginalized by the dominant late nineteenth-century culture and linked by socialist/feminist rhetoric, are placed in central positions in these reimagined visions of what England could become. If Corbett's *New Amazonia* and Mears's *Mercia* posit that Utopia must, by definition, be located somewhere other than England, then *Glorianna* and *Nowhere* imagine that the land itself is fertile for a utopian society but its inhabitants must be transformed. Although placed in a familiar setting, these texts and authors estrange, just as vigorously as did Corbett and Mears, late nineteenth-century culture and government by imagining that utopia can come to England itself if only government and culture as the late Victorians knew them were literally turned downside up.

Dixie and Morris succeed in redefining "other" by implicating their audiences even as they enlist their sympathy and support. These utopian fictions estrange familiar *fin-de-siècle* culture by targeting a specific segment of the dominant culture, and then demonstrating the ways in which society could be redefined when the balance of power shifts from one group or ideology to one previously marginalized. In a very

tangible way, women, the working classes, anti-capitalists, and anti-Imperialists are moved from the lower rungs of power to positions of influence.

Lady Florence Dixie's 1889 utopia *Glorianna, or the Revolution of 1900* anticipates women's suffrage as Dixie imagines a society in the very near future in which women are given their due. Dixie, born of privilege herself,² writes to inspire Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett's "ladies" who may find within themselves feminist tendencies. She also sought to tap the conscience and sense of fair play of their husbands and fathers with a vision of future in which women are no longer bound by Victorian conventions of behavior, education, or dress. In this utopia, set but a few years into her future, Dixie presents a revolution which brings about an enlightened England in which women vote, are educated alongside men, and allowed to participate in public life. The laws of "nature" play a major role in determining right and wrong in *Glorianna*. In the preface Dixie writes that her purpose is to speak of "evils which *do* exist . . . to sketch an artificial position--the creation of laws false to Nature--unparalleled for injustice and hardship" regarding the status of women (ix).

In Dixie's England, women, like men, are judged on the basis of individual merit rather than social constructions and cultural expectations of their gender, because

² Dixie was the sister of Lord Queensbury, a man most notable as the accuser of Oscar Wilde. Dixie was widely travelled and served as the correspondent for a London newspaper reporting on the Boer War. In addition to the utopia examined here, she wrote an account called *Across Patagonia* describing her adventures in Patagonia with her husband and the essayist Max Beerbohm.

all "artificial" constraints have been removed by law, a rich irony in itself, since human-made laws could be argued to be themselves unnatural constraints. This enlightenment is brought about by a young woman named Gloria de Lara, born in 1873, who masquerades as "Hector D'Estrange" to gain access to a man's education and privilege, while making the most of her considerable political and intellectual gifts to secretly build a case for woman's emancipation and gender equality.

Although clearly designed to transform conventional *fin-de-siècle* culture regarding the position of women in public life, there is little else in *Glorianna* that would upset a bourgeois, privileged, socially conscious audience. Gender roles are essentially unchanged, with the significant exception that women gain legal, as well as moral, authority in Dixie's vision. Girls are allowed to develop their physical strength and vigor, just as boys are encouraged to do, and are no longer weak and pitiable creatures. Most significant in terms of an intended readership is that the English system of government remains intact however much it is challenged by Gloria's armies. The revolutionary women seek not to overthrow the government, merely to join it. What is in flux is the role of women in government, not the essence of English government itself. Reform, rather than revolution, despite the novel's title, seems to be the aim.

The primary action of *Glorianna* takes place after "Hector" has risen to a position of political influence. Hector is thwarted in his campaign of political and social reform by the sinister Lord Westray, the abusive former husband of Speranza de

Lara, Gloria's mother.³ Westray doesn't know that Hector D'Estrange is in fact the daughter of Speranza de Lara. He mistakes the close relationship between Hector and his former wife as a romantic one, and in a possessive rage, vows to ruin Hector. Westray kidnaps Speranza and attempts to force her to remarry him. Hector and his friend Evie Ravensdale save Speranza, but Hector wounds Westray during the rescue. Westray, whose wound is superficial, disappears. His confederate, Detective Trackem, feigns discovery of Westray's body and charges Hector D'Estrange with murder. During the trial, Hector is revealed to be Gloria de Lara. So popular was Hector with women, the working classes, and fair-minded aristocratic men, that he continues to inspire and lead as Gloria. When Gloria is convicted of Westray's murder, she escapes police custody and the "revolution" of the book's title begins, with legions of common people who were loyal to Hector proving equally loyal to Gloria.

Westray's plan, after discrediting Hector D'Estrange, is to kidnap and kill

Gloria de Lara. The plan almost works but for a terrible storm at sea. Gloria survives

³ Gloria de Lara comes from a decidedly matriarchal lineage. Gloria's mother, Speranza, was born to a young widow from the Midland Counties whose husband was a handsome but penniless officer in the British army. The girl's father, enraged at this imprudent love match, had cut his daughter off "without a shilling" (9). The dashing captain died in a tragic accident before Speranza was born and the mother died of a broken heart within a fortnight of Speranza's birth. Orphaned, Speranza and her two older brothers were adopted by her father's rich relative, the Earl of Westray. Speranza herself, forced into a loveless marriage to her cousin, the future Lord Westray, runs away with yet another dashing captain, Harry Kintore, by whom she becomes pregnant, marking Gloria as the "offspring of forbidden love" (8). Gloria's matriarchal beginnings come full circle when Westray murders Kintore shortly before Speranza gives birth to Gloria.

and is washed ashore in South America. Westray's deception is exposed when his drowned body washes ashore after the shipwreck. Gloria returns triumphantly to England to resume, as a woman, her post as Prime Minister. The revolution is complete. Gloria marries Evie Ravensdale, and they, with the help of Gloria's loyal followers, reform England. The novel ends with an epilogue in 1999 in a pastoral, utopian England.

In reimagining a society that allows women to rise to power, two definitions of class emerge in *Glorianna*. First is a natural aristocracy of moral fiber contrasted with a "to the manor born" aristocracy.⁴ Westray, Gloria/Hector's nemesis, is of the latter kind, and serves as a negative exemplar for what privilege can do to a man. Westray, the son of Speranza's adoptive father, has been spoiled by the "false and mistaken affection" of his scheming and resentful mother (10). The young viscount's character has been ruined by "[i]njudicious indulgence" that has laid "the seeds of selfishness and indifference to the feelings of others" (11). Gloria's mother, Speranza, anticipating the kind of man young Westray is to become, refuses his proposal of marriage. Westray's mother, enraged by this refusal, blackmails Speranza by threatening to "ruin" her two brothers if Speranza does not consent to "gratify her

⁴ The notion of a natural aristocracy based on moral fiber is supported by the role servants play in Dixie's division of men along lines other than those of class. The manservant of Evie Ravensdale, an indifferent but essentially decent man transformed into a man of moral action by the influence of Hector D'Estrange, is characterized as true and honest, if a bit pompous (91), while Westray's man is laconic, lazy, and hypocritically insincere (79).

darling boy's passion" (13), and so she marries Westray. Marriage is thus established here, and later in the novel, during Launcelot Trevor's epiphany, as a relationship that has everything to do with power and little to do with love, affection, or regard.

To further illustrate the point of a moral versus a hereditary aristocracy, Westray is compared to the shady detective, Mr. Trackem. Westray, grown to maturity when the action in *Glorianna* begins, contracts with Trackem to find and kidnap Speranza so that he can force her to marry him again after eighteen years:

They [Trackem and Westray] shake hands, these two scheming monsters, both intent on a base and ruffianly deed, yet one of them is regarded as a gentlemen [sic], is received and welcomed by society, is high in the graces of the Government of the day, and accounted a clever man and useful statesman. . . . Wickedness will not bar Society's doors against him or lose him his high preferments. Is he not a man, one of the dominant and self-styled superior race? Therefore, is he not free to do as he pleases? (83).

Dixie's narrative voice thus begins to build a case for a natural aristocracy based, not on gender or artificially imposed station in life, but on virtue, honesty, and intelligence. If it so happens that those who behave admirably are also well-born, all the more comforting and inspiring for Dixie's readers.

Further, class divisions are not seriously questioned, although the privilege of class is. The working classes are loyal to Hector D'Estrange because in Hector they see a sympathetic and noble spirit who is capable of easing their lot in life. Gloria, as Hector, oversees the building of a great "Hall of Liberty" meant to be a kind of school

and training ground for women. In a stirring speech at the opening of the Hall, Hector appeals to his bourgeois audience to consider the implications of the inequality of women:

You boast of a civilization unparalleled in the world's history. Yet is it so? Side by side with wealth, appalling in its magnitude, stalks poverty, misery and wrong, more appalling still. I aver that this poverty, misery, and wrong is, in a great measure due to the false and unnatural position awarded to woman (78).

The "you" in this speech appears to be the dignitaries and decision-makers that are in the audience, yet Hector leaves the Hall "amidst the roar of the thousands that are there to greet. Such is the welcome of *the people* to Hector D'Estrange" (78). The people, essentially the working classes, are so won by Hector's sense of fair play that later, when Hector is revealed to be a woman, their loyalty is unshaken. Male or female, it seems, an eloquent champion is too valuable to reject.

However, when a woman (or a man) behaves heroically or nobly in this story it is always someone well-born, whether that birth is known or not. The implication is a conventional one that noble blood will show itself in a crisis. At the same time, however, it is clear that not everyone born with a title is noble. In this sense, Dixie questions the notion of inherited privilege, choosing instead to suggest that respect and honor must be earned, even by aristocratic men. The inconsistencies that appear in *Glorianna* reveal much about vexed position that any member of the ruling class, as Dixie was, advocating political change would find herself in. Dixie's position as an

upper-class woman is doubly vexed. She must argue for a transformation of the government on behalf of her sex while remaining sensitive to her class origins. Further, as she herself suggests in her introduction, she must take care not to alienate the male friends she considers staunch supporters. In the original preface to *Glorianna*, Dixie affirms that the novel

pleads woman's cause . . . [pleads] for her freedom, for the just acknowledgement of her rights. It pleads that her equal humanity with man shall be recognized, and therefore . . . that in woman's degradation man shall no longer be debased (xi).

Dixie goes on to assert that "*Glorianna* is written with no antagonism to man. Just the contrary. The author's best and truest friends . . . have been men" (xi).⁵ Throughout the story, both Gloria and the omniscient narrative voice make it clear that

⁵ In the preface to the 1892 American edition of *Glorianna*, George N. Miller, author of *The Strike of a Sex* writes that

If it be permissible, in a spirit of reverence, to compare a wholly beneficent thing with a blighting one, I would say that the visible progress of woman in these *fin de siècle* days, reminds me of nothing so much as the coming of an army of locusts. There is a suddenness, a reality, an omnipresence about it that give it . . . the foreboding of a winged and pervading host (xi).

In this curious way, Miller expresses his belief that the "coming of woman" is a good thing. That Miller, a man sensitive to the position of women in *fin-de-siècle* culture, would use devouring hordes, however self-consciously, as a metaphor for the "coming of woman" is perhaps an indication of the apprehensively sympathetic male audience that Dixie sought to reach along with her suffragist female audience.

men are not monsters solely by virtue of their sex. Many men, as well as women, are victims of an "unnatural" social arrangement. One such man, Launcelot Trevor, upon reading Hector's "Essay on Woman's Position," is startled by the resonance Hector's arguments have for him:

The revelations thrown upon woman's position by the straightforward, truth-breathing article of Hector D'Estrange, have taken him by storm, and have completely revolutionized his ideas. He has hitherto been so accustomed to look upon and treat women with the self-satisfied, conscious feeling of superiority assumed by men, that such ideas as these before him are startlingly strange and extraordinary. His position with [his faithless, empty-headed wife] Vivi, and hers to him, presents itself . . . in a totally different light . . . he never paused to ask himself if his love were returned. He recalls full well the bitter look that had crossed her face when he had asked her to marry him (24).

He realizes that Vivi does not love him, and that she married him to "survive." because, as Hector has pointed out in his essay,

in no other quarter [besides marriage] can [women] adopt agreeable and pleasant professions . . . Women, *especially in the higher grades of society*, marry only to escape . . . the prim restraints of home. Others marry for money and position, because they know that the portals, through which men may pass to try for these, are closed to them (23, emphasis mine).

Trevor feels that even though the adulterous Vivi has erred "according to the notions of propriety laid down by Mrs. Grundy," it is the fault of "cruel laws" that leave her "no other option but to sell herself for gold" (24). Both the musings of

Launcelot Trevor and Hector's specification of women of a certain class suggest that Dixie sought to destabilize the discourse of class and gender specifically within her own class.⁶

Dixie also directly addresses her intended audience in her preface. Along with those who will sympathize with her argument, she anticipates that there are others. "hating truth, [who] will receive it with gibes and sneers; there are many, who, delighting in the evil which it fain would banish, will resent it as an unpardonable attempt against their liberties" (x). It is to this latter group, privileged, resisting Englishmen, that the ideologue Gloria de Lara most seeks to address.

The primary ideologue in *Glorianna* is Gloria herself. Gloria's mother, widowed before Gloria was born, raised her daughter alone in an unspecified Mediterranean location. The novel opens in the year 1885 with a young Gloria declaring to her mother that she will change the course of life for generations of women by proving that, given the chance, women are just as capable as men. Gloria asks her mother for help in implementing her plan, which begins with a formal education. When Speranza exclaims "To school, child! I thought you always have

⁶ A horse race described near the beginning of the novel functions as a metaphor for what is to become of aristocratic English society during *Glorianna's* revolution. The favored horse, supported by the all-male network of aristocrats, is ruined by the excess of his energy, and is in the end outrun by a mare owned by Hector D'Estrange (59-65). That this metaphor grows out of a traditionally upper-class sporting event also reveals much about the segment of English society that Dixie hoped to reach (Dodd 6).

begged me not to send you to school." Gloria replies, "It must be a boy's school. mother. You must send me to Eton. . . don't you understand?" (9). Gloria has skillfully grasped the fact that although "education" of a sort was available to girls in the late nineteenth century, it was not the kind of education that would allow her to enter public life or curry influence.⁷ Indeed, Gloria's mother, though apparently as intelligent as she is beautiful, was not given the benefit of an education; Speranza was not sent to school as were her brothers. Indeed, "being a girl, [she] had no chances thrown out to her" (10). The narrative voice laments that Speranza's attributes of beauty, strength, health, and cleverness are of no use to her. Speranza herself moans bitterly that "If I were only a boy . . . I could make my way in the world. I could work for my living, and be free" (10). Instead, she is at the mercy of Westray and his conniving mother.

The novel moves ahead several years to 1890, after Gloria has entered Eton and then Oxford under the masculine pseudonym Hector D'Estrange. Hector has created quite a stir by handily winning every conceivable honor and sporting event at both schools. As reader and author rejoin Gloria/Hector, Hector has won a seat in Parliament. His essays and speeches are widely read and influential pieces addressed primarily to the upper classes, and particularly upper-class men, like Launcelot Trevor.

⁷ Although by 1889, women's colleges had been established at Oxford for over a decade, for Gloria to gain any real power, it was necessary to go to the right college at Oxford, and then, as now, these did not include exclusively female ones (Dodd 4-6). thus necessitating her masquerade as a man to enter Oxford.

As the revolution develops, the conflict clearly becomes that of the aristocracy versus the "people" and upper middle-class women. When Hector is revealed as Gloria de Lara during her trial for the murder of Westray, Gloria's friend and first lieutenant (Lady) Flora Desmond rescues Gloria with the help of the crowd. The throng that has gathered in the streets in support of Gloria/Hector closes around the police coach "willing and eager to assist in the work of rescue. The odds are too great to allow the representatives of law and order to prevail" (148). As she rides away from the scene, Gloria tells the crowd that the greatest evils are social ones:

To them I ascribe all the sufferings and sins of the poor, the sins and false position of the rich. There are bad laws which must be done away with, good ones which must be set up to accomplish social reform. Before you can do this you must set Nature on an even footing, and do away with the artificial barriers which you have raised against woman's progress and advancement; for until she has the same powers and opportunities as a man . . . reform . . . will never be efficiently undertaken (149).

For the first time, Gloria is suggesting that the "people" may be able to effect change. However, the structure of the novel, with its focus throughout on the strengths and failings of the upper classes, suggests a slippage. Gloria/Hector often speaks to the upper classes who remain in power. Yet it is "the people" who heartily endorse and support Gloria.⁸ In the speech cited above, the people are called to

⁸ Gloria's address to "the people" is an example of double-voiced discourse with two very distinct intentions. The character speaks to the working classes, the author to the upper.

action, although indeed it seems the only action they are capable of effectively taking is to support Gloria. Throughout the novel, members of the privileged classes are the real agents of change, and Dixie implicitly, perhaps unconsciously, acknowledges this.

After rescuing Gloria from the police, Flora is sheltered by "the people" (176). and "humble friends" protect Gloria during her escape from London (178). Lord Pandulph, a minister in the corrupt all-male cabinet that meets to discuss what to do about the revolution, futilely urges prudence in dealing with Gloria, because, as Hector, she has "worked her way into the affections of vast numbers of the working classes" (171). All classes, "prince and peer" and "laboring man and peasant." (72) as well as "mixed denominations and sexes" (73) have been attracted to Hector during his rise to the post of Prime Minister.

Just as Dixie seems to argue that the liberation of men is dependant upon woman's emancipation, so she argues that women's emancipation is dependant upon home rule for British dependents. Suffrage has been given women, but Hector D'Estrange goes one step further to propose a "bill embodying a simple act of justice to woman," a three-fold proposal to educate men and women together; to change the rules of inheritance so that the eldest *born*, rather than the eldest *son*, is heir; and to make women eligible to sit in Parliament (109).

This act of long-delayed justice, Hector tells the House of Commons. has been postponed because

. . . the local affairs of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales . . . might be more profitably, efficiently, and quickly disposed of in the separate countries named, leaving the time that is consumed here in attending to them free for the consideration of great . . . social questions (106-07).

In the final pages of *Glorianna*, the connection between home rule and women's emancipation is once again underscored. In the epilogue, a stranger being shown around the England of 1999 sees a gentrified land and a green, almost rural London. One of the most interesting sights is, in its way, a monument to Gloria de Lara:

"Yonder splendid building is the Imperial Parliament, is it not?" pursues the stranger.

"Yes, sir. That is where the representatives of our Federated Empire watch over its welfare. To Gloria of Ravensdale we owe the triumph of Imperial Federation. She lived long enough to see England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales peacefully attending to their private affairs in their Local Parliaments, while sending delegates to represent them in the Imperial Assembly . . . [where] men and women from all parts of our glorious Empire [work] hand in hand" (284).

Just as she has liberated women from the position of domestic dependent, Gloria de Lara has liberated Imperial dependents. Women, so long colonized in their own bodies, in their own country, are at last moved to the center of power in the revolution that began in 1890 and culminated in 1900. As women gained their independence, so did the dependant nations of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Thus,

Dixie suggests that colonization, be it physical or psychic, is unnatural and not to be tolerated.

The conflict between "nature" and technological and social artifice is also a central theme in William Morris's socialist utopia *News from Nowhere: An Epoch of Rest* (1892). Industrialization and technology, and the obsession with production and consumption they spawned, define the *fin-de-siècle* culture that late Victorian socialists like Morris's narrator Guest sought to change. Buying and selling of any sort is unheard of in Nowhere. It is a utopian society where community is paramount, and one in which technological progress simply has no independent value outside of what technology can do to enhance human relationships and labor.⁹ As one character points out, in this utopia production is related, not to "material necessity," but to a love of the work (178). As Guest soon learns, the "scientific," technologically aggressive, capitalist culture that shaped him, albeit against his will, has made him as alien to these future English men and women as if he had come from another planet (76).

⁹ *Nowhere* is not anti-technology; it is simply not "techno-centric." The "force barges" in Chapter XXIV of *Nowhere* offer a good illustration of the value technology has in this Utopia. The barges are mechanically powered, but a description of their mechanical make-up is not included, because it simply is not important for its own sake. The part the barges play in Guest's trip up the Thames, rather than the driving force behind them, is the focal point of their inclusion in the story.

Morris is neither anti-technology nor anti-intellectual, in spite of the undeniable fact that scientific principles and technology play a small part in his utopian ideal. Morris imagines a world, so different from his own, in which technology is a means, not an end. There is technology in Nowhere, just as there was industry and technology in Morris's own productive life and work. The difference in Nowhere is that technology is clearly subservient to human needs and desires.

Guest begins his dream of Nowhere after a volatile League meeting at a socialist hall in Victorian London. At this meeting there was heated discussion about the shape the Revolution would take, and Guest entered the discussion "roaring" and "damning all the rest for fools" (8). On the way home, as he sits stewing in "that vapour-bath of hurried and discontented humanity, a carriage of the underground railway" (8), Guest regrets having lost his temper. Contrite, he nonetheless longs to "but see a day" of the Revolution (8).

On this oddly enchanted night in winter, Guest is moved in time to Nowhere. He realizes with a start that he is no longer in a "shabby London suburb" when he looks down the Thames to discover that icon of Victorian industry, the familiar suspension bridge, has been replaced. The Thames looks so beautiful in the moonlight that at first Guest doesn't realize that the "ugly bridge" with its "row of lights downstream" has mysteriously disappeared (9). The well-wrought bridge replacing it becomes a symbol of the high value Nowherians place on beautiful utility. This principle, as Guest sees it, has come to guide life in Nowhere.

In this utopian view, the industrial squalor that was nineteenth-century London is an inevitable outcome of capitalism. Rather than using science and technology as a way to make life better, *fin-de-siècle* science became obsessed with "product" and output at the expense of environmental and social health.

As Guest explores this reconfigured society, *News from Nowhere* becomes an examination of his education in this new world, and, by implication, of the socialist audience that Morris sought to reach. The interpreting ideologues Guest meets weave

a picture of the fabric of life in Nowhere, and in so doing, both pull together and estrange elements of Guest's time. Through the voices of his ideologues, Morris derides the values of the *fin de siècle* as he elevates "natural" and "unartificial." i.e., low-tech, approaches to living. For Nowherians, nineteenth-century industry equals product which equals artifice. The ideology of commerce and the effects of industry in the *fin de siècle* are described as having tainted every aspect of life, including basic human relationships and the treatment of marginalized groups, particularly women and the working classes.

Guest, with his experience of the nineteenth century, is the first important voice in the novel, and is instrumental in estranging the culture and the politics of his own time. Each character Guest meets in Nowhere explains, justifies, and elaborates on Nowherian customs. Although Bakhtin's contention that each speaking person in a novel is an ideologue seems particularly true in *Nowhere* (333), it is most useful to examine Guest's interactions with two of *Nowhere's* most significant representatives, boatman Dick's great grandfather Hammond and Ellen.

Hammond acts as a transitional figure between the nineteenth century of Guest and William Morris and the forward looking, visionary Ellen. Florence Boos, taking up Bakhtin's general comments about the narrative voice in any novel as the voice of the ideologue, argues that Ellen in *Nowhere* is the primary interpreter of the new society--not just a "distant erotic ideal" (205). Morris's multiple voices, with Guest as nineteenth-century man, Ellen as a representative of the new order, and Hammond as the ideologue who can bridge the gaps between their worlds, give depth and dimension

to conversations about life in Nowhere. Furthermore, the positioning of Guest's encounters with these ideologues frames this vision of the future. Guest's experience in Nowhere fairly begins with Hammond, since the first person he speaks to in Nowhere is Dick, Hammond's great grandson; Guest's journey ends with a final vision of Ellen, whose bright recognition of Guest slowly gives way to mournfulness as he fades from Nowhere and is returned to his own time (*Nowhere* 276).

The most commanding and richly metaphoric discourses available to Guest are the discourses of science, technology, and production. Guest demonstrates disapproval, irony, and skepticism about his own time as well as this future time through these familiar discourses. For instance, when Guest observes the women of Nowhere sweeping the floor of the dining hall "scientifically," he mocks the privileging of nineteenth-century science even as he privileges the "ordinary" domestic act of sweeping a floor (190).¹⁰

Although Guest is himself a nineteenth-century socialist, little in his philosophy has prepared him for the communist society he finds in Nowhere. According to

¹⁰ The beginnings of the dichotomization of "hard" and "soft" science in the distinction between orthodox and amateur science begins in the professionalization of Victorian science (Dolby 275). Science as a hobby was often the domain of gentleman dabblers in the sciences, and was largely a speculative exercise. Mid-century debates over the role of science within the larger culture evolved into a specialization and professionalization of science that made these gentleman scientists a threat to the scientific academy (Yeo 7). To suggest that science could be accessible to the amateur was to challenge the intellectual authority of the scientist. This anti-specialist stance acknowledged the ability of the common person to understand and interpret the world and called into question divisions of all kinds in the culture.

Guest's Nowherian guides, the root of nineteenth-century evil was a production driven culture and an obsession with ownership that permeated every aspect of late nineteenth-century life.¹¹ Guest has an intellectual understanding of this Marxist principle, but he must be led into the twenty-first century experience of it by the ideologues he meets. The reader, and Guest, are invited to see nineteenth-century culture as strange and "unnatural" even as some Nowherians recognize the necessity of the nineteenth century as a predecessor to their own age.

Nineteenth-century education is one of the first social conventions Guest finds estranged in Nowhere. Formal education is non-existent and nineteenth-century education is described as a product of a bankrupt system. Even though he himself thinks of *fin-de-siècle* English schools as "boy-farms" (43), Guest is nonetheless shocked to learn that Nowhere has no schools. Dick, initially confused by Guest's questions about education, soon understands that Guest means "book-learning" and attempts to explain that although Nowherians are not keen on such book-learning, they are not simple. Most children, he informs Guest, learn to read by the time they are four. They also frequently "pick up" Latin and Greek. Moreover, children are often multi-lingual:

¹¹ Old Hammond defines the "rights of property" to mean "the clenching the fist on a piece of goods and crying out to the neighbours, You shan't have this" (107).

. . . sometimes even before [children] can read, they can talk French. . .
 . they soon get to know German . . . along with Welsh, or Irish, which
 is another form of Welsh; and children pick them up very quickly,
 because their elders all know them (45).

A still unsettled Guest later expresses concern to Hammond that Nowherians allow their children to "run wild" because they have "so refined [their] education, that now [they] have none" (88). Hammond answers with the criticism that the conventional Victorian school system was one that impeded intellectual growth, suggesting that "No one could come out of such a *mill* uninjured; and those only would avoid being crushed by it who would have the spirit of rebellion strong in them" (89, emphasis mine). Guest is again startled to hear his own ideology turned back to him so forcefully, giving up Hammond as "hopeless" on the subject of education (90).

Dick's response to Guest's observation that a finely wrought pipe is "too valuable for its use" is to inquire what Guest means by "valuable." It becomes clear, to the endless chagrin of Guest, that nineteenth-century standards of value and worth are utterly foreign in Nowhere. Guest finds he is "helpless" to make Dick understand what he means (66). Further, Guest, no contented Victorian, finds himself in the position of apologist for the late nineteenth century. Guest struggles mightily to understand the "pure communism" of Nowhere, but his *fin-de-siècle* sensibilities are continually shaken.

Upon entering the communal hall the morning he wakes up in Nowhere. Guest immediately notices that the women have been considerably altered.¹² They are clothed, he reports, "like women, not upholstered like arm-chairs. like most women of our time are" (23). Although the men, like Dick, artisan-cum-boatman, are similarly attired, it is not until he notices the women that he truly realizes that London is now a different, wondrous place. As Guest's experiences in Nowhere unfold, he gradually learns how his nineteenth-century Socialist ideals have been made manifest in this England of the future.¹³

Guest, despite his socialist ideals, cannot quite grasp Nowherian ideas about ownership and trade. Upon being given the aforementioned pipe that is "too grand . . . for anybody but the Emperor of the World." Guest asks "But however, am I to pay for such a thing as this?" Dick lays his hand upon Guest's shoulder and the "comical expression" in his eyes seems merrily to warn Guest against displaying "another exhibition of extinct commercial morality" (55).¹⁴

¹² Morris also makes an interesting reference to gender when he comments that the women were at least as attractive as the "gardens, the architecture, and the *male* men" of Nowhere (23, emphasis mine).

¹³ As Dick and Guest explore London, two children shopkeepers tell Guest that they are partial to ginger-beer and lemonade. Guest is immensely satisfied by this information because it reassures him that some things, at least, have not changed. He reflects "Well, well . . . children's tastes [have not] changed much" (57).

¹⁴ Ownership is inherently bad in any form in Nowhere, and the overt evil of slave ownership is equated with capitalist employment, as evidenced by Dick's discussion of "slave-holders or employers of labour in the history books" (58).

The slippage of Guest's nineteenth-century socialist values is revealed as he considers the fine craftsmanship in Nowhere. He is pleased by the architecture and the clean beauty of the place, but wonders at the elaborateness of Nowherian "trinkets" like his newly acquired pipe:

"This pipe is a very elaborate toy, and you seem so reasonable in this country, and your architecture is so good, that I rather wonder at your turning out such trivialities."

It struck me as I spoke that this was rather ungrateful of me, after having received such a fine present (65-66).

Guest's new pipe is both an object of desire for him and a "trinket." It is beautiful, but essentially useless, in all the ways Guest understands use, and it becomes a symbol of work, craft, and value in Nowhere.

Guest's *fin-de-siècle* socialism itself is estranged in Guest's conversations with Hammond. Socialism in the nineteenth century failed, according to conventional Nowherian wisdom, because nineteenth-century socialists sought only to alter "the machinery of production and the management of property" so that the lower classes could use that machinery for bettering their condition. This adaptation policy did not work, in Hammond's view, "because it involved the making of a machinery by those who didn't know what they wanted the machines to do" (133).

Machinery functions as a powerful metaphor for Guest's nineteenth century. It comes to represent power and production for its own sake, not in the service of a greater communal good. As Hammond describes it, nineteenth-century government became the "machinery of tyranny" employed to keep the poor, poor, and the rich, rich (109). Machinery in all its connotations was at the root of the great revolution that led to utopian Nowhere; Hammond avows that "all historians are agreed that there never was a war in which there was so much destruction of wares, and instruments for making them as in this civil war" (175). The reason for this wanton destruction of technological innovation is, according to Hammond, because

it was seen how little of any value there was in the old world of slavery and inequality. . . [because] there was no hope; nothing but the dull jog of the mill-horse under compulsion of collar and whip; but in that fighting-time that followed, all was hope. . . (174).

Throughout his narration, Guest has admired Nowherian structures. The Thames, always beautiful to Guest, even in his own time, is even more beautiful in Nowhere, because the railway, part of the "degradation" of the nineteenth century, has disappeared. As he gazes out on the valleys around Oxford, he notes with pleasure ". . . two or three very pretty stone houses new-grown on it (I use the word advisedly; for they seemed to belong to it) looked down happily on the full streams and waving grass" (243).

Guest's attitude toward the architecture and the women in Nowhere is strikingly similar. Morris suggests, through Guest's language and his observations of the organic and harmonious nature of both the architecture and Ellen, that women and the very land are yoked together by Victorian industry.¹⁵ Once women were freed of the tyranny of nineteenth-century science and progress, they could take their true place as full and equal participants in a new society. Like the land, they had been spoiled and rendered ugly by the nineteenth century.

Indeed, the position, appearance, and nature of emancipated women has been redefined in Nowhere. The intelligence of Nowherians lies in the attention to the details of life, and in this, Guest finds

. . . the women knew as much about all these things [the details of the natural world] as the men: could name a flower and knew its qualities; could tell you the habitat of such and such birds and fish, and the like (229).

Imagination is a most privileged trait in Nowhere, and in this context the characterization of Nowherians, particularly women, as child-like is not a

¹⁵ In this respect, Morris rejects the dominant socialist ideology of the late nineteenth century. He comes much closer to early nineteenth-century Owenite socialism and its belief that liberation of all people and all classes is an intrinsic part of a true social revolution. Chapter 1 of Barbara Taylor's *Eve and the New Jerusalem* discusses more fully eighteenth- and nineteenth-century socialism as a feminist ideology.

condescension. Guest notices a frieze depicting fairy tales in a dining hall he visits and raises Dick's ire when he says, "I should have thought you would have forgotten such childishness by this time" (139). At this, Dick turns "rather red" and declares "What *do* you mean, guest? I think them very beautiful, I mean not only the pictures, but the stories" (139). Later, Hammond remarks that "it is the child-like part of us that produces works of imagination" (141), something held in great stead in Nowhere. Just as Nowherians fail to feel patronized when Guest chides them for not "outgrowing" fairy tales, so they are not offended by what he sees as "rudeness" when he remarks that Nowherians are in a "second childhood." Far from insulted, Hammond smiles "Yes, why not? And for my part, I hope it may last long" (142).

Guest remembers the "listless mechanical" way poor women in the nineteenth century went about haymaking in their "wretched skimpy print gowns, and hideous flapping sun-bonnets" (192) as he anticipates the haymaking party that is the aim of his river journey. He contrasts this hideous image of country folk with the healthy, robust, happy people he meets in the countryside of Nowhere. Later, when the boating party that includes Ellen, Guest, Dick and Dick's wife Clara arrives at Kelmscott Manor, Guest surveys the scene "dreamily" contrasts it with country scenes from his own time. He half expects to see

the gay-clad company of beautiful men and women change to two or three spindle-legged back-bowed men and haggard, hollow-eyed, ill-favoured women, who once wore down the soil of this land with their heavy hopeless feet . . . But no change came as yet, and my heart

swelled with joy as I thought of . . . this happy and lovely folk, who had cast away riches and attained to wealth (263).

As Guest tours London with Dick on their way to meet old Hammond, he seizes on familiar landmarks from the London of his own time to orient himself in this new land. Hammond's function as a transitional figure for Guest is established before they even meet. The building where Hammond lives and works, to Guest's delight is a porticoed structure that is "no less old a friend . . . than the British Museum" (70).

Thus Hammond, who lives in the old, much beloved British Museum, links Guest in a concrete way to the twenty-first century. Hammond, a one-hundred-and-five-year-old scholar of the nineteenth century, is familiar with that century, the great revolution, and contemporary life in Nowhere. He delights in critiquing and analyzing Guest's time, yet seems oddly familiar to Guest. Indeed, Guest's first encounter with Hammond brings about a shock of recognition. Guest reports that he looked at Hammond "harder than good manners allowed . . . for in truth his face . . . seemed strangely familiar to me; as if I had seen it before--in a looking-glass it might be, said I to myself" (74).

Later, after Hammond and Guest are more well acquainted and Guest is aware of Hammond's insights and prejudices concerning the nineteenth century, he remarks that Hammond is "very bitter" about that time. Hammond replies, "Naturally . . . since I know so much about it" (133). Hammond then admits that his grandfather was

"one of its victims" (133), and so his interest and understanding of the nineteenth century is much more than academic or theoretical.¹⁶

Hammond and Guest discuss a wide range of topics that have been established as recurring themes throughout Guest's stay in Nowhere, including the relative importance of history to culture, nineteenth-century socialist ideology as compared with Nowherian reality, the insidious nature of industry and commerce, and the effect of a production-centered society on human relationships.

Capitalism for Old Hammond equals unnecessary production, a "ceaseless endeavour to expend the least possible amount of labour on any article made, and yet at the same time to make as many articles as possible" (129). Hammond reserves his strongest language of all for a description of these cheaply made goods; they are "abortions" that glut the world market (131). The real triumph of the nineteenth century, according to Hammond, was "the making of machines which were wonders of

¹⁶ This is reminiscent of Corbett's narrator seeing her old piano in a drawing room in New Amazonia. She realizes that she has been asleep for centuries, but somehow recognizes her instrument in the reconfigured Ireland (21). The suggestion is that the familiar is still there but in radically altered form. In the above passage from *Nowhere*, Morris seems to suggest a familial link between himself and Hammond. Indeed, perhaps Hammond is the grandfather who Hammond calls "a genuine artist, a man of genius, and a revolutionist" (134) who suffered in the nineteenth century.

invention, skill, and patience, and which were used for the production of measureless quantities of worthless make-shifts" (133).¹⁷

Because Nowherians have broken free the "tyrannies" of production for production's sake, and of ownership as a worthy goal in itself, they are also free of the dangerous habits of nineteenth-century men and women in their relationships with one another. Hammond makes these tyrannies clear when he and Guest discuss the "woman question" of the nineteenth century. Hammond, like the comfortable communist he is, blames the capitalist economy of the nineteenth century for the dissatisfaction of women and for their ill-treatment at the hands of husbands, fathers, and legislators. When women are viewed as property, and love as a matter of exchange and purchase, Hammond declares that it is no wonder that morality came to be unnaturally dictated by the courts of law (79). Hammond connects commerce and artifice when he says "we have ceased to be commercial in our love-matters, so also we have ceased to be *artificially* foolish" (81, emphasis Morris).

When Guest and Hammond discuss maternity and the "emancipation of women" the conversation suggests that the nineteenth-century custom of viewing children and woman as domestic possessions is instrumental in creating the "*artificial* burdens of motherhood" that prevent women from enjoying the process of childbearing

¹⁷ Paul Johnson in *Birth of the Modern* notes the early Victorian genius for the production of beautiful and well-wrought machinery, suggesting that the creation of the machines' "arresting forms" was end enough for Victorian engineers (584).

and rearing (85, emphasis Morris). The miseries of nineteenth-century women stem from the "respectable commercial marriage bed" (87) and misguided notions of the "sacred rights of property" that reduce marriage relationships to business deals (79).

Further, the commodification of women and marriage is blamed for a host of nineteenth-century social ills. In explaining that Nowhere has no criminal law "In [Guest's] sense of the word" (112), he points out that

"the greater part of [crimes of violence] in past days were the result of the laws of private property, which forbade the satisfaction of their natural desires to all but a privileged few . . . many violent acts came from the artificial perversion of the sexual passions, which caused overweening jealousy and the like miseries. Now, when you look carefully into these, you will find that what lay at the bottom of them was mostly the idea (a law-made idea) of the woman being the property of the man, whether he were husband, father, brother, or what not. That idea has of course vanished with private property, as well as certain follies about the 'ruin' of women for following their natural desires" (112).

The evils of ownership and the Church are joined as Hammond blames nineteenth-century Christianity for much of women's oppression in a speech reminiscent of New Amazonian engineer John Saville. He connects three pervasive oppressors of the nineteenth century when he asserts that woman, freed from the oppressions of the "'Society' of the [Victorian] day . . . its Judaic god, and the 'Man of Science' of the time" is

respected as a child-bearer and rearer of children, desired as a woman. loved as a companion, unanxious for the future of her children . . . [women have] far more instinct for maternity than the poor drudge and mother of drudges of past days . . . or than her sister of the upper classes, reared in an atmosphere of mingled prudery and prurience (86).

Thus, for Hammond, science, religion, and society all conspired in the nineteenth century to keep women in drudgery and ignorance. Perhaps even more damning, nineteenth-century Christianity has become irrelevant, and its Bible has become an "old Jewish proverb-book" written for a different place, a different people (69). Victorian Christianity, like the nineteenth century itself, has become inconsequential, and the residents of Nowhere know very little of it. Ashamed and embarrassed for his own time, Guest acknowledges that although Hammond speaks "warmly" he is nonetheless right (86).

If Victorian education, religion, and science do not fare well in Nowhere, history, implicit in the study of all these nineteenth-century institutions, merits even less favor. Dick reports that old Hammond has said that "it is mostly in periods of turmoil and strife and confusion that people care much about history; . . . we are not like that now" (45). Historians and those who value the past are considered "queer antiquarians" who fight to preserve significant buildings. Dick explains that these antiquarians opposed the destruction of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's during the Great Clearance in the twenty-first century despite the fact that most citizens felt the buildings were "worthless, and public nuisances" (48).

Indeed, Hammond, although he looks with disdain on many nineteenth-century beliefs and customs, laments the lack of historical perspective among his fellow utopians:

I don't think my tales of the past interest [the young people of Nowhere] much. The last harvest, the last baby, the last knot of carving in the market-place, is history enough for them. It was different, I think, when I was a lad, when we were not so assured of peace and continuous plenty as we are now (76).

The only exception to Hammond's assessment of Nowhere's younger generation seems to be Ellen, who emerges as the representative of a new order (Boos "Egalitarian Sage" 205). Ellen is a young woman who lives in the country with her grandfather and seems a deeply organic part of this new world to Guest. She is as integral a part of Nowhere as the grey stone houses that emerge from the landscape. She is a "piece of the summer country" (*Nowhere* 208), her face looks "as if the warmth of the sun were yet in it" (208), and her beauty seems to Guest "almost wild" (203). These tributes to an untamed beauty would seem conventional but for Ellen's pivotal role as an ideologue who speaks for a new civilization. Ellen would have been part of the rural working class, or lower, in Guest's time. Instead, she is a prototype for a new breed of humanity, made possible by a rejection of Victorian ideology and the dehumanizing effects of technology, production, and a rigid class system.

Although all the women he meets are a delight to Guest, most, like Clara, are not unlike "very pleasant and unaffected" young ladies of his time. These girls "seem

nothing more than specimens of very much improved types which I had known in other times" (239). Ellen, however, is "not only beautiful with a beauty quite different from that of 'a young lady,' but [is] in all ways so strangely interesting" (239).

Ellen is "the Other" to everything Guest--and Hammond--represent. She is young (20 to Guest's very old 53), female, and poor, or what would have been poor in Guest's time.¹⁸ However, by making Ellen and her speech the focus of the latter part of the novel, Morris effectively, finally, estranges both Guest and his culture. The identity of "other" shifts steadily during the course of Guest's stay in Nowhere, and by the end, Guest, the middle-class, nineteenth-century Socialist, realizes that he is far too much a product of the nineteenth century to be allowed to stay in Nowhere. Ellen's position as "other" because she is a female, very much of Nowhere, and more forward looking than many of her contented Nowherian neighbors, makes her become "center" by story's end. Readers of *Nowhere* often complain that women serve no function in Nowhere but to be "young and available" (Lewes 36). Rather, by consciously making Ellen an agent of a new world, Morris recognizes the emergent power of women under what he views as a more just system. Ellen doesn't talk, or think, like a "feminist" because she doesn't have to. In her, Morris offers an example of both a working-class woman and a culture that has transcended both gender and class as limiting factors.

¹⁸ For a Nowherian, 53 is quite young. Guest, however, as a product of nineteenth-century stress and unwholesome living conditions, seems excessively aged in the twenty-first century.

As Guest becomes more and more attached to Nowhere and to Ellen, he is reassured to learn that some Nowherians, particularly Hammond and Ellen, recognize that the nineteenth century was valuable and important. In a curious way, the nineteenth century was necessary for the twenty-first one to emerge. Nowhere doesn't exist in an Age of Invention because, as another talkative Nowherian tells Guest, "the last epoch did all of that [inventing]" (*Nowhere* 227). Guest, and *Nowhere's* audience, are thus reassured that their age does have a kind of meaning and purpose.

In Ellen's most important speech to Guest, Nowhere is not presented as utopia, but as another step on the road to a more perfect world. The trip that Ellen and Guest, along with Dick and Clara, take upriver on the Thames is, like many fictional river journeys, one of discovery for Guest as he becomes immersed in this new society at Ellen's side.¹⁹ On the way, Ellen, recognizing that Guest is from another place and time, lets down her guard and begins to talk to Guest not only about the triumphs of Nowhere, but of her fears for its future. In these fears, the reader, and Guest, get a fuller picture of this society and the anxieties of the nineteenth century that are mirrored in it.

Ellen alone seems to implicitly understand that Guest is not from her time.

Sensing this, Guest confesses:

¹⁹ Patrick Parrinder in "*Heart of Darkness: Geography as Apocalypse*" compares the up-river journeys of Guest and Marlow as journeys to "the heart of an alien social order and a journey in symbolic, apocalyptic time." Morris and Conrad use the river journey to establish and explore "a mental chronology" (94).

I find it easier to imagine all that ugly past than you do. because I myself have been part of it. I see both that you have divined something of this in me; and also I think you will believe me when I tell you of it (245).

Ellen alone realizes that they will "lose" Guest soon (268) and strives to understand his time as he strives to know hers. She also recognizes that too great an unconsciousness of the past that Guest represents is dangerous. Guest's nineteenth century might be unpleasant and dangerous, but, Ellen tells him:

I think sometimes people are too careless of the history of the past--too apt to leave it in the hands of old learned men like Hammond. Who knows? Happy as we are, times may alter; we may be bitten with some impulse towards change, and many things may seem too wonderful for us to resist . . . if we do not know that they are but phases of what has been before (254-55).

Perhaps the most revealing example of Ellen's self-awareness and her historical perspective comes as she muses on what she would have been in Guest's time. Despite her grandfather's conviction that she would have been a "lady" in any time, Ellen understands the social, cultural, and patriarchal pressures that would have determined her "station in life" in the nineteenth century, saying:

In the past times . . . we [Ellen and her grandfather] must have lived in a cottage whether we had liked it or not; and the said cottage, instead of having everything we want, would have been bare and empty. We should not have got enough to eat; our clothes would have been ugly to

look at, dirty and frowsy. You, grandfather, have done no hard work for years now, but wander about and read your books and have nothing worry you; and as for me, I work hard when I like it, and because I like it, and think it does me good . . . But in those past days, you grandfather, would have had to work hard after you were old, and would have been always afraid of having to be shut up in a kind of prison along with other old men . . . And as for me, I am twenty years old. In those days my middle age would be beginning now, and in a few years I should be pinched, thin, and haggard, beset with troubles and miseries (211).

What Ellen "might have been" prompts Guest to exclaim:

I was thinking of what you, with your capacity and intelligence, joined to your love of pleasure and your impatience of unreasonable restraint--of what you would have been in that past. And even now, when all is won and has been for a long time, my heart is sickened with thinking of all the waste of life that has gone on (267-68).

Ellen responds:

. . . if I had lived in those past days of turmoil and oppression . . . I should have been one of the poor, for my father when he was working was a mere tiller of the soil. Well, I could not have borne that; therefore my beauty and cleverness and brightness . . . would have been sold to rich men, and my life would have been wasted indeed. . . I should have been wrecked and wasted in one way or another, either by penury or by luxury (269).

Ellen's speeches, interspersed with Guest's memories of shabby, careworn, ill-favored country women of his time, seems a concrete example of the liberating effect

of the revolution that created Nowhere. The face, and the body, of the laboring and agrarian classes has been radically changed by the absence of a culture based only on determining the material worth of men and women and the exploitation of their labor. Moreover, in using Ellen as the primary ideological representative of this new age, as contrasted with the [male] Guest and Hammond, Morris implies that the change is most profound for the classes most oppressed by commerce--women and the poor.

The primary ideologues of *Glorianna* and *News from Nowhere* are young women. As such, both Gloria de Lara and Ellen represent but one manifestation of double-voiced narrative. In addition to the dialogic function of language, Dixie and Morris illustrate an inherent dialogic function between the expectations of their nineteenth-century audiences and the fictional identities of their speakers. All the main speaking characters in these texts play against cultural stereotype; Gloria and Ellen are but the chief examples. As these characters work against cultural expectations, they carry on an unspoken dialogic relationship with the audience by demonstrating the bankruptcy of nineteenth-century notions about gender, privilege, ability, and social class.

In the next chapter, H. G. Wells moves these nineteenth-century concepts of white male privilege back into the center of his prophetic fiction, and as he does so, the mood of the future becomes decidedly darker as Wells's heroes find themselves anachronisms in a world of their own making.

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CHAPTER IV

FEAR AND LOATHING IN THE FUTURE:
THE VISION OF H. G. WELLS

"Still England it seemed, and yet strangely 'un-English.'"

H. G. Wells
When the Sleeper Wakes (1899)

—
God damn you all, I told you so

Wells, proposing his own epitaph

At the end of Elizabeth Corbett's *New Amazonia* the narrator returns to the nineteenth century as inexplicably as she arrived in the twenty-fifth. Just before she returns to her own time, there is the faintest suggestion that she is beginning to have some doubt about the utopian principles in this transformed Ireland. The intolerance, whatever the intent or motivation, toward illegitimate children and toward men and women who do not conform to New Amazonian ideals troubles the narrator. Her warning to Augustus Fitz-Musius about his possible execution seems to make her return to her own time inevitable; it is as if doubt cannot exist in utopia, else the illusion of it will fade.

The ephemeral quality of utopia is echoed in Morris's *News from Nowhere*. When Guest sadly realizes, along with Ellen, that he is not fit for the world of Nowhere because he is not "of it," his dream-vision quickly fades. The same note is

sounded over again in the visions of the future described in previous chapters. Like Peter Pan's Tinkerbell, these *fin-de-siècle* writers seem to suggest utopia can only exist if you believe. The moment there is doubt in the mind of the narrator, the moment that the Victorians estranged by utopian ideology cease to be "them" and begin once again to look like "us," the vision of utopia is dispelled.

In the scientific romances of H. G. Wells, the protagonist is often similarly caught between two worlds, never fully entering the future, never fully letting go of the nineteenth century. Wells's future travellers are white, middle-class Englishmen, and by definition in a position of cultural power in the late nineteenth century. These time travellers are not completely happy with their century, often expressing criticism and skepticism, but neither can they view the changes in the future as improvements. It is a more difficult task to imagine positive change from a power position; because the narrative self in Wells's fiction is, in a sense, a central part of the problem, the consequences of change looks very different to him. Wells's scientific romances have often been discussed in terms of their evolutionary anxiety, but there exists embedded in these fictions a more personal, white, middle-class, male anxiety as well.

This anxiety alters the effect of estrangement so necessary to the credibility of *Gloriana*, "Island of Progress," *Mercia*, *New Amazonia*, and *News from Nowhere*. It is important, even in the ultimately dystopian "Island of Progress," for the narrative voice to enter into the future hopefully. Since the protagonists in these previous fictions are suffragists, feminists, and socialists, the society that they see estranged in the future, while it is "their" *fin-de-siècle* society, is nonetheless one in which they

occupy the margins. In Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) estrangement gives way to a sensation that readers of Wells have characterized as a "dethronement" of man.¹

For Wells's Time Traveller, the Sleeper, and the unnamed narrator in *War of the Worlds*, the society they see estranged is one where they occupy the center. Whereas marginalized protagonists must, even if only temporarily, replace allegiance to the present with faith in the future, Wells's protagonists sense only displacement of familiar values with precious little replacement. The sense that things can and will change no longer strikes a hopeful note in the heart of the nineteenth-century narrator or future woman warrior. Unlike the female heroes in the many feminist utopias or even the agitated Socialist in *News From Nowhere*, Wells's heroes are deeply anxious about their place in the future. The notion that power and status are dependent on the cultural environment is empowering to the narrators and heroes in the utopias I have discussed thus far, but in Wells it leads to uneasiness and a sense of an indeterminate future. The shifting, unstable cultural position that feminist and socialist utopias sought to exploit and change becomes a hero's worst nightmare in Wells's early scientific romances. For Wells's forays into the future, change is inevitable while progress for humankind is not.²

¹ Parrinder, Manlove, and Philmus all discuss the "dethronement" that occurs in Wells's fiction as devolution diminishes the supremacy of man.

² Wells noted the hopeful tone of Utopian fiction as being a serious, albeit not realistic attitude that holds "if only you would" (Wells *Utopias* 118). Wells did not

One of the first signals that the perspective on the future has shifted dramatically is the lack of an ideologue or guide in Wells's future fiction. This underscores the anxiety with which the protagonist faces the future world. *The Time Machine*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, and *War of the Worlds* all thrust Victorian gentlemen into strange, ostensibly advanced societies but they are guided, not by an enlightened future ideologue, but by the perceptions of the threatened hero himself. There are no sure explanations, and no indisputable truths. The hero is often put in the position of speculating about this new society, and he, and we, are never sure of the facts.

The absence of an authoritative voice or trustworthy character begins the process of estranging the Victorian hero from both his own Victorian society and the one into which he stumbles. As the hero is vexed by an inexplicable culture, so the reader is vexed by the ambiguity of the text. Because the hero must attempt to make meaning of the text of the future unaided, he is never able to participate in the future world as Guest, Mercia, Glorianna, and *New Amazonia's* narrator do. By the end of Wells's anticipatory tales, the hero, having seen the dark consequence of Victorian science, capitalism, and Imperialism, no longer belongs in his own time even if he is lucky enough to be restored to it. Because he has seen, and believes he understands,

count himself among prominent utopians, calling himself instead an "anticipatory" writer. Wells imagined that his own fiction was somewhat more realistic, anticipating for his readers what would happen, because "if only" was too impossibly hopeful.

the future, he no longer belongs anywhere. Rather than being both at the margins and at the center of society, as is the narrative self in previous chapters, Wells's main characters are at the margins of everything and the center of nothing.

Wells's six early scientific romances, of which *The Time Machine*, *Sleeper*, and *War of the Worlds* are three, do not describe a perfect utopian existence although all anticipate the effects of humankind's evolution, both biological and social. Wells's (de)evolutionary theory "punctures the absurd pride" that leads man to think that he is the ultimate product of evolution (Manlove 235). His heroes fear biological dethronement, but they also fear a psychological and social dethronement that renders them impotent against things they do not fully understand and cannot combat. The effeminate Eloi and brutishly masculine Morlocks³ the Time Traveller meets in *The Time Machine*, the morally ambivalent and politically ambiguous society predicated on trade in *When the Sleeper Wakes*, the repulsive, brutal but intellectually advanced Martians in *War of the Worlds* signify a convergence of biological and social evolution that very few Victorians would have called "progress" (237), yet Wells exploits the same Victorian fears and hopes that the feminist and socialist utopias in my previous chapters address.⁴

³ Elaine Showalter has called the Morlocks' underground habitat a "*fin-de-siècle* leather bar" (76).

⁴ Veronica Hollinger observes that "*The Time Machine* accomplishes its own ironic deconstruction of Victorian scientific positivism couched in the very language of the system which it sets out to undermine" (201).

Wells's first scientific romance, *The Time Machine*, follows a familiar formula for prophetic literature. In it, a representative of the nineteenth century is propelled into the future by his own hand and finds a new, apparently utopian, culture grown on the land he knew as England. The Time Traveller is in many ways a typical Wellsian protagonist. He is a gentleman inventor with a scientific propensity, marking him as modern and progressive. He is something of a loner, unburdened by family, yet a strong believer in Victorian values and the comforts of home and hearth. His status as a loner gives him a detached air, while his scientific approach allows him an intellectual distance from Victorian culture. He is, at the same time, very much shaped by his culture and carries nineteenth-century sensibilities, values, and expectations with him into the future.

The Time Traveller leaves the nineteenth century in a time machine that he has built. He initially reveals his plans to a small circle of regular dinner guests, who are understandably incredulous. Determined to prove the efficacy of his invention, and intensely curious about the future, the Time Traveller somewhat recklessly rides his invention into the future. When he finally stops the machine, it is 802,701, and England is greatly changed. Because he meets no suitable ideologue to guide him through this new world, he relies upon familiar values to make sense of what human society has become. The people he meets are called Eloi, and the Time Traveller finds that he literally cannot communicate with them, largely because he doesn't have

the patience to learn a language that seems so clearly inferior to him. The language of the Eloi is comprised of "exquisite little sounds" (48) but it is "excessively simple--almost exclusively composed of concrete substantives and verbs."

Unlike English, this native tongue has virtually no abstract or figurative terms (56). It is, as far as the Time Traveller can tell, inadequate to express his questions and ideas. He quickly abandons efforts to communicate with the Eloi, apparently preferring to blunder through this exotic world unfettered by the facts. The absence of a guide to explain things in their new context to him forces him to create unstable, inadequate, and ultimately unreliable explanations. Like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, the Time Traveller believes himself to be a powerful presence among the Eloi and their underworld counterparts, the Morlocks, but in truth, he has little real power because the source of his authority in the nineteenth century--his scientific knowledge--has no value in the world of 802,701 (Abrash 7).

Although the Time Traveller himself imagines the world of the future totally unlike "his" England of the nineteenth century, events framing his narrative suggest otherwise. The tension generated by what the narrator appears to believe and what events imply underscores the vexed position of a narrator who considers change both inevitable and threatening to his position of power. The Traveller's first-person narrative, which forms the core of the novel, is framed by the story of another, anonymous first-person narrator. This anonymous narrator is a frequent dinner guest of the Time Traveller's who is present both the night the Traveller unveils his theory of time travel and a week later when the Time Traveller returns from 802,701. The

events in this frame narrative curiously parallel the events the Time Traveller describes in the distant future, suggesting that the Time Traveller is not as far removed from the Eloi and Morlocks as he, and we, might believe. The world revealed by the anonymous narrator at the beginning of the story becomes a microcosm of the world the Time Traveller finds in the future, with the most obvious suggestion in the representation of the small scale model of the machine itself. As the story opens, the Time Traveller reveals to his friends a working model of the machine that will propel him into the future. Further suggestion that the two worlds are not so very far apart is strong. After the Time Traveller bursts in on the dinner guests the night of his return, the frame narrator notes the Morlock-ish "soft padding sound" the Traveller's feet make as he walks toward the staircase (39). The Morlocks, as the Time Traveller has learned, are pale and furtive, padding on all-fours (61) with "soft little hands" (78).

The behaviors and attitudes of the Eloi and Morlocks, which so disgust and trouble the Time Traveller, are ironically mirrored in his own behavior when he returns to his own time, as well. The Time Traveller discovers that the Eloi exist mainly on fruit, noting that "[t]hese people of the remote future were strict vegetarians" (47), but the Morlocks are most definitely carnivorous. The most horrifying theory the Traveller develops is that the Morlocks feed on the Eloi. When he makes his way to the secret underworld of the Morlocks, he sees a large joint of meat (66) later deducing "I felt assured now of what it [the meat seen in the underworld] was, and from the bottom of my heart I pitied this last feeble rill from the great flood of humanity. . . . These Eloi were mere fatted cattle" (71). Yet, troubling

as this dietary discovery has been, he calls, with obvious relish, for meat no less than three times upon his return. As he leaves the dining room to refresh himself after his journey, he tells his speechless dinner guests, "Save me some of that mutton. I'm starving for a bit of meat" (39). He exclaims that it is "a treat . . . to stick a fork into meat again" (40) and later admits that he hesitated coming into the dining room when he returned until he "sniffed good wholesome meat" (87).

If the Morlock's preference in meat does not deter the Time Traveller's relish for it, neither does a recognition of the harm done by unequal relationships based on power temper the Time Traveller's arrogance. At one point, the Traveller theorizes that the society he has come upon is a natural, evolutionary, outgrowth of nineteenth-century social class structure, yet repelled as he is by this idea, his attitude toward his own servants or toward the less powerful Eloi is not altered. The Eloi, he speculates, were a "favoured aristocracy" that had "decayed to a mere beautiful futility." The Morlocks must then be descended from servants in the old order who care for the physical needs of the Eloi out of an "old habit of service" but in truth are the masters rather than the slaves (68). Whatever insights the Traveller has gained into the destructive nature of relationships based on power and superiority do not translate to transform his behavior. As soon as he realizes that the Eloi are not "manly" creatures, he regains his shaken confidence (45) and he surprises even himself when he realizes "how speedily [he] came to disregard these little people" (48). Because they are not

what, or who, he expected, he has little regard for them.⁵ He casually rings for the help to clean up the "greasy plates" as he and his guests retire to the drawing room. belying his ability to translate this lesson of the future into his own comfortably superior attitudes (40).

These superior attitudes are also embedded in his assessment of 802.701. The comparisons he makes between the future and the nineteenth century reveal his values and mark him with the conventions of his age. He notices that all around him, this new world has "no small houses . . . the single house, and possibly even the household, had vanished . . . the house and the cottage, which form such characteristic features of our English landscape, had disappeared" (49).

His theorizing reflects an intellectual distance from his own century, but his language also reveals an admiration for the values of his age, even though he personally may not possess these virtues. He concludes that hardship nurtures the "conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall." Such hard conditions "put a premium upon the loyal alliance of capable men, upon self-restraint, patience, and decision." Most importantly, however,

⁵ Abrash notes the Time Traveller's "poor judgment, unstable temperament, lack of foresight, and sheer incompetence" (7) as a warning to others of the "hubris of science" (10). Likewise, Haynes discusses the "tactical mistakes" the Time Traveller makes that stem from a misplaced "faith in reason." This faith is misplaced because the "little certainties [and] assumptions of order" that he carries with him disintegrate in the world of 802,701 (9). Manlove notes that in much of Wells's prophetic fiction he "punctures the absurd pride of man" (235).

the institution of the family, and the emotions that arise therein, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness for offspring, parental self-devotion . . . found their justification and support in the imminent dangers of the young (51).

Because those dangers have been vanquished in 802,701, the Time Traveller, a man without a family himself, surmises, perhaps erroneously, that intelligent and energetic humanity "had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lives. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions" in the feminized, weak, complacent Eloi (39).

Gender and Empire, important cultural signifiers in *fin-de-siècle* utopian fiction, figure importantly in Wells' descriptions of the future. The Eloi are represented as a naive native population--child-like, playful, and erotically unself-conscious. The smallness and frailty that characterize the Eloi echoes diction characterizing middle-class Victorian women as small, delicate, childlike creatures⁶ and this feminine aspect of the Eloi makes it very easy for the Time Traveller to disregard them. The Eloi are "hairless" with a "girlish rotundity of limb" (35) suggesting to the Time Traveller that "specialization of the sexes" is no longer necessary (35). Indeed his description of Weena, his "little woman, as I believe *it* was" (52), disdainfully qualifies the humanity of the Eloi. Weena becomes a "creature" pretending to be a human female in the

⁶ Critics and scholars of Victorian literature have long noted the cult of smallness and littleness in nineteenth-century representations of women. See Ellen Moers, U. C. Knoepfelmacher, and Frances Armstrong for a more detailed discussion of smallness, childishness, and Victorian womanhood.

Time Traveller's mind. Her gratitude and friendliness toward him after he saves her life affects him "exactly as a child's might have done" (52).⁷

In action reminiscent of European colonists' dismissal of poorly understood custom and tradition as childish superstition, the Time Traveller's dismissal of his "little woman" prevents him from sensing the very real danger posed by the Morlocks. Weena, aware that the Morlocks take advantage of darkness to capture and presumably slaughter Eloi, is terrified of the dark. The Time Traveller, displaying none of the deductive intellectual skill that his contemporaries believe him to possess, arrogantly believes that it is "mere childish affection," not justifiable dread, that drives Weena to object to being left alone (58). After noticing that the Eloi sleep together in "droves," the Time Traveller still misses the point, insisting upon sleeping apart from the others, ignoring the "lesson" of their fear of the darkness (59).

The suggestion of a decaying Empire is never far from the Time Traveller's descriptions, and the world of 802,701 has a decidedly Oriental feel. The English landscape the Time Traveller knows is gone; instead he finds a lush, decadent garden, presided over by the white Sphinx. The Sphinx, the first and last sight the Time Traveller has in 802,701, is a prominent landmark everywhere he ventures, continually informing him of his position, yet the reader is constantly reminded that this

⁷ The Eloi, male and female, possess what the Time Traveller describes as a "Dresden-china type of prettiness" (28).

overwhelming landmark is decayed and sightless. The Sphinx becomes a symbol of an exotic, alien England, devoid of human vision or direction.⁸

The decay that is so apparent in the future world is conflated with the fate that Wells predicts for British Imperialism, for this is an English landscape degraded by the presence of exotic, Oriental plants and a diseased Sphinx. The omnipresent Sphinx carries the "unpleasant suggestion of disease" (44) and its sightless face is "leprous" (52). The Sphinx is connected with the exotic Orient in yet another way. When the Traveller becomes convinced that his machine has somehow been taken into the base of the Sphinx and decides to hold a watch to discern what may have happened, he quickly gives up because he is "too Occidental for a long vigil" (55).

If the Sphinx is diseased, then the English countryside surrounding it is equally corrupted. All around the Sphinx is "a long-neglected and yet weedless garden" and the remnants of buildings that dot the landscape have a "dilapidated look" (30-31). These ruins, like everything else in this incarnation of southern England, are exotic and "un-English." There is a "ruinous splendour" around "thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants" (48). There is a "vast green structure . . . [in] nineteenth-century Banstead" that has an "Oriental look; the face of it having the lustre, as well as the pale-green tint . . . of Chinese porcelain" (64).

⁸ The rich symbolism of the Sphinx has been noted by a number of readers. It is an "avatar" of threatening humanity (Hume 248); an Oedipal symbol and a symbol of science (Scafella 255). Paradoxically, the Sphinx also holds the answer to one of the Time Traveller's greatest mysteries, the location of his time machine (256).

The sense of alienation and displacement is completed by the reader's inability to fully "believe in" the Time Traveller, even as the Time Traveller doubts his own interpretations of events. The unfamiliar terrain only underscores the Traveller's tenuous interpretation of events. The frame narrator casts doubt on the Traveller's reliability in the opening pages of the narrative, describing him as "one of those men who are too clever to be believed" (37). The dinner guests' initial reaction to his time machine is well-placed incredulity; the Traveller's reputation as a kind of scientific put-on artist is established when the "Medical Man" asks ". . . is this a trick--like that ghost you showed us last Christmas?" (37). The general anxiety that courses throughout all of Wells's scientific romances is epitomized in this novel by the Time Traveller's insecurity about his own theories; the Traveller is a man who is used to being right, both as a consequence of his scientific expertise and his position as a white, well-educated Englishman. When he cannot be sure of the truth as he *thinks* he sees it, the value of his own experience is called into question. He undercuts his own credibility and doubts his own reasoning powers, calling himself a "blockhead" to have missed the lesson of the Eloi fear (59). He frequently admits that he "doubts" his own eyes (59) and almost as quickly as he can formulate a theory about 802,701, he realizes that it falls "far short of the truth" (62). For example, he suggests to his listeners that the triumph of the above-ground people was a triumph not only over nature but over "Nature and the fellow-man" in the Morlocks. But then he adds, "[t]his . . . was my theory at the time. I had no convenient cicerone in the pattern of

the Utopian books. My explanation may be absolutely wrong. I still think it is the most plausible one" (63).

Near the conclusion of his tale, he offers his final theory about the interdependent relationship between the Eloi and the Morlocks, again underscoring the speculative nature of his accounting with "It may be as wrong an explanation as mortal wit could invent. It is how the thing shaped itself to me, and as that I give it to you" (98). Finally, after sensing the resistance to believing his adventures among the men gathered in his drawing room, he says

No, I cannot expect you to believe it. Take it as a lie--or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race until I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest. And taking it as a story, what do you think of it? . . . I hardly believe it myself. . . And yet . . . (87).

Given the characterization of the Time Traveller as a man too clever by half, it is difficult to know what to make not only of the skepticism of his friends, but of his own constant undercutting of his story. One wrong-headed theory after another comes from the Traveller, and the reader, as well as the listeners in the dining room, cannot be sure that any of this is the truth. Because the Time Traveller is unable or unwilling to learn from Weena and the other Eloi, who, in another kind of utopian tale would be the ideologues to guide him through this garden, there is ultimately no way to know what brought about the society the Traveller finds in 802,701. He has to depend upon

his own wits and nineteenth-century experience to instruct him in this future world. and by his own admission, these things are inadequate and this inadequacy feeds the Traveller's anxiety about the future. The arrogance of the Time Traveller and the ineffectuality of his nineteenth-century ideologies about commerce, social class, and Empire suggest, in this earliest of Wells's scientific romances, that the identity of the hero is as much a source of anxiety as the changes that are wrought. Change for the Time Traveller is a terrifying prospect because he is so comfortable in his nineteenth-century skin.

Like the Time Traveller, the protagonist of Wells's 1899 scientific romance *When the Sleeper Wakes* finds his explanations of the future similarly inadequate and unstable. The Time Traveller and the Sleeper rely on conventions of nineteenth-century life to shed light on inexplicable events, and find that these conventions lead them both terribly astray. The general outline of *When the Sleeper Wakes* is forecast early in the text of *The Time Machine* when one of the Traveller's dinner guests, The Very Young Man, excitedly considers the financial advantage of time travel: "Just think! One might invest all one's money, leave it to accumulate at interest, and hurry on ahead!" (7). This is precisely the scenario of *Sleeper*. In this novel, the central reality of the future is its indeterminacy. Graham, the Sleeper of the title, like the Time Traveller, finds himself in a future he does not understand and cannot control. His constant efforts to make sense of the twenty-second century against nineteenth-century values is made more difficult because he cannot find anyone to act as an interpreter of the future. He must put together what information he has piecemeal, in

the context of what he does understand about trade, capitalism, Imperialism, and gender roles. Not surprisingly, he is disappointed and bewildered by what he finds. Change, social and political, has come to England, sown, as the Sleeper surmises, by the seeds planted in the nineteenth century, and he finds that the results of these changes are far from his century's ideals. Aggravating the situation is the determination of the people who inhabit the Sleeper's future to keep their visitor as ignorant as possible about their habits, customs, and politics.

When the Sleeper Wakes, like *The Time Machine*, presents a conventional sequence of events in *fin-de-siècle* prophetic fiction. In this variation, a nineteenth-century man falls asleep under incomprehensible, unexplained circumstances and awakens several hundred years later into a greatly changed future England to find that not-quite posthumous investments made in his name have paid off handsomely. In this story, Graham, the tormented Victorian artist, cannot rest.⁹ Literally unable to sleep for six days, he finally falls deeply into what another character describes as "either death or a fit" (14). Graham wakes over two hundred years later to find an urban

⁹ It is never clear why Graham is so distraught in the beginning of the story. It is also interesting to note that Graham is the only name we are given for this character. It is not known whether Graham is the artist's Christian name or his family name. Later, when he awakes in the future, he becomes known only as "the Sleeper," and his nineteenth-century identity is essentially gutted. Like the hero in *The Time Machine*, known only as the Time Traveller, Graham becomes more icon than man.

England built on the interest from investments made with his money in the nineteenth century.¹⁰

When the Sleeper Wakes is one of the least studied of Wells's scientific romances. If mentioned at all in surveys of Wells's work, it is often noted for its "jerky plot" and Wells's flagging "imaginative energy" (Suvin 30-31). It is certainly one of his most unresolved stories. Graham's identity is vague; his initial ailment is vague; the events that formed the future are vague.¹¹ Indeed, the central paradox and the central difficulty of this novel lies in Graham's curious longing for the values of the Victorian Age, even as he rejects the society those very values have produced.

¹⁰ After Graham fell into his sleep, guardians of his estate invested funds. Because Graham obviously had no need of them, these investments grew undisturbed to staggering proportions. By the time Graham awakens, he finds that he "owns" fully one half of the future (87). The irony of this ownership is constantly put before the reader, since Graham has little real power and less knowledge of the political machinations of this new world. He is useful to the divisive political factions of this future England only as the symbolic "Sleeper."

¹¹ He tells Isbister, his accidental ally in the nineteenth century

I am a lone wolf, a solitary man, wandering through a world in which I have no part. I am wifeless--childless . . . I could find no duty to do. No desire even in my heart. One thing at last I set myself to do (6).

This "one thing" is never clear. It appears to have been some kind of artistic endeavor, but its nature is never revealed, and it is never mentioned again.

Early in the novel, Graham has an oddly reflective moment that frames the rest of the events in the novel. Just as the Time Traveller muses on the possibility that the seeds for the decadent future he finds were sown in the nineteenth century, so the Sleeper recognizes that the nineteenth-century was "making the future . . . and hardly any of us troubled to think what future we were making" (64). The culpability of his own age in forming the one he awakens into is clear. This future that the Sleeper awakens into is a future where the values of trade and capitalism have run rampant and one that has seen the rise of an oppressive "second aristocracy" who rule because they control technology. It is also a future in which racial and ethnic stereotypes of Empire that gained a foothold in the nineteenth century have become deeply ingrained as fact in the consciousness of all classes of people. The nineteenth century thus becomes both the root of the evil in the twenty-second and the source of democratic hopefulness. The political situation has evolved into the oppressive dictatorship that has developed precisely because of the initial investment made in the late nineteenth century in Graham's name. He is "Master" of the world because he legally owns it and Graham naively expects to be allowed to rule. The property rights that Graham so optimistically believes entitle him to rule, however, are what has made this world so very intolerable. Money and property carry far more weight than legal rights, and so determine power in a very material way.

Graham's talents, desires, fears, ambitions are all left obscure and undefined. He speaks elliptically to Isbister of "drawing towards the vortex" of something (7) but falls asleep before any of this is made clear. Vagueness, evasiveness, and

indeterminacy characterize both Graham as the Sleeper and the distressed world into which he has awakened. The sense of impotence Graham feels when he declares to Isbister that he exists in a world in which he has no part does not abate when he awakens as owner of half that world.

The sense of Graham's impotence and his actual and psychic distance from what is happening around him is pervasive throughout the novel, and this distance becomes another manifestation of anxiety and insecurity. In *Sleeper*, unlike *The Time Machine*, the hero *can* communicate with the representatives of the new culture or species, but in Wells's England of the twenty-second century, the ability to communicate does not mean knowledge will be shared. Curiously Graham more than any other character acts as an "ideologue" espousing nineteenth-century ideals rather than progressive, future ones; the Sleeper ardently wishes for a return to the values that shaped him rather than grasping the complexities of this new world through the eyes of a Hammond, an Ellen, or a John Saville. In fact, when Graham meets the old man in the ironically titled chapter "The Old Man Who Knows Everything" he finds the antitheses of the ideologue. Instead of a twenty-second century sage who can shed some light on events for him, Graham finds an old man who knows even less about events than he does. The old man does not even "believe" in Graham, insisting that the "real" Sleeper died years ago and was replaced by the devious Council (108). Thus Graham's effectiveness is further reduced as his twenty-second century identity is questioned, just as his nineteenth-century one has been erased.

The inherent anxiety embedded in the impossibility of the Sleeper understanding his new world is evident as soon as his custodians in the future realize he is awake. One of the "assistant-custodians" in charge of Graham admonishes a subordinate not to "confuse [the Sleeper's] mind *by telling him things*" (35, emphasis mine). This same assistant-custodian, in answer to Graham's many questions, tells him "I can't tell you what is happening. It is too complex to explain" (37). Soon after his revival, Graham is "restless and eager for information" but must wait "until someone came to him." He is confined to a cell-like room behind a door that he can discern no means of opening (63). Graham's isolation from the new world is signified in the descriptions of scenes that he observes. When he first enters the great hall of the Council that rules in his name, the overwhelming image is that of distance. The dais at the center of the hall is "remote" and the men gathered around it "seemed to have arisen" at the moment Graham walks in (53). They regard the Sleeper "as in the nineteenth century a group of men might have stood in the street regarding a distant balloon that had suddenly floated into view" (54). The Sleeper cannot hear what these Lords of the Council are saying, so he must observe a "visible [but] inaudible conversation" they have about the Sleeper and their own situation (55).

Later, when the rebel forces liberate Graham from his Council chambers, his first glimpse of his rescuer is of an indistinct form, seen through the rotating blades of a roof fan (72). He blindly flees with this man, merely changing handlers, rather than achieving any real kind of liberty:

. . . he appreciated [this rescue] in a fragmentary manner as his rescuers stood about him. Someone threw a thick soft cloak . . . about him . . . Things were said briefly, decisively. Someone thrust him forward.

Before his mind was yet clear a dark shape gripped his arm. "This way," said this shape . . . [pointing] in the direction of a dim, semicircular haze of light (77).

Disembodied voices and hands, commanding and clutching, are all that Graham is aware of during his flight. During the flight he can never get a clear perspective on where he is. It is dark and snowing heavily, and the landscape that Graham can discern is "wild and strange," a "broad stretch of level" broken only by "gigantic masses and moving shapes, and lengthy strips of impenetrable darkness, vast ungainly Titans of shadow" (80). Graham's disorientation returns during a worker's rally Graham attends. The Council cuts off electric power, and ". . . the appearance of the packed masses changed, became a confusion of vivid lights and leaping shadows. [Graham] saw a multitude of shadows had sprung into aggressive existence" (94).

Graham soon feels "invisible forms" all around him as "something" raps against his leg and a disembodied voice reassures him that is it "all right" (94-95). Through all of these scenes of rescue, celebration, and battle, Graham maintains the same detached perspective. Ironically, the scene is so crowded with people that he can see no one clearly. He sees only vague, dark shapes. As the Sleeper, he is aware that he is a "blind creature of the fear of death" yet cognizant that "[a]ll these wonderful things concerned him, turned upon him as a pivot" (97). The dissonance of his position does not abate throughout the novel.

As Graham view events in the twenty-second century from a distance, as if he is in the still, silent eye of a hurricane, so too does the nineteenth-century become increasingly unreal to him. Unlike the utopian fiction where the narrator "dreams" his or her way into the future, Graham knows from the beginning that he is in this frightening land for ever. From the moment Graham wakes, his former life has become terribly vague to him. Graham recollects that "[h]e must have slept. . . . He recalled the cliff and waterfall again, and then recollected something about talking to a passer-by [Isbister]" (24). Graham knows nothing beyond this except that "I went to sleep somewhere . . . I don't exactly remember. I don't exactly remember" (34). Later, he is "surprised . . . to find how vague the memories of his first thirty years had become" (65).

The Sleeper's estrangement from his own century is complete psychologically as well as temporally as he dimly realizes that his previous life had been one of "deepening misery" and believes that "[b]y a miracle he had been lifted out of a life that had become intolerable. . . ." (66). Although his former life had become unendurable to him, it is even more terrible to Graham to realize how marginalized he is in his present situation. Graham sees

his own infinite littleness . . . the tragic contrast of human strength and the craving of the human heart. For that little while he knew himself for the petty accident he was, and knew therewith the greatness of his desire. And suddenly his littleness was *intolerable*, his aspiration was *intolerable* (154, emphasis mine).

The biological and evolutionary overtones of this passage are evident, but it is also evident that Graham feels personally torn asunder. His existence in the nineteenth century has been obliterated, and his presence as anything more than a political symbol in the twenty-second century is insignificant, and he finds both the nineteenth and the twenty-second centuries "intolerable."

Undertones of Empire and colonization are present from the moment Graham wakes up in the twenty-second century, and these suggestions, like the presence of the Sphinx in *The Time Machine*, alternately signify luxury and decadence. The "Great Hall of the Atlas" where the Council sits is decorated in a "quasi-Japanese" fashion (55). The story cylinders that Graham finds in his rooms upon waking include Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (61). Graham finds to his surprise that the London of the twenty-second century is a multi-ethnic place. After the overthrow of the Council, in an effort to get Graham out of the way, the leader of the rebel forces provides him with a guide so that Graham may explore the city freely. This person is an "obsequious valet" whose face "proclaim[s] him Japanese, albeit he spoke English like an Englishman" (139). This guide, Asano, explains to the Sleeper that the "yellow peril" of the nineteenth century has dissipated:

The Chinese spectre had vanished. Chinaman and European were at peace. The twentieth century had discovered with reluctant certainty that the average Chinaman was as civilised, more moral, and far more intelligent than the average European serf, and had repeated on a gigantic scale the fraternisation of Scot and Englishman that happened

in the seventeenth century. As Asano put it: "They thought it over. They found we were *white men* after all" (146, emphasis mine).

Thus "citizens of Chinese extraction were no longer ashamed of their race" (157).

However, the "froth of pink faces" (85) the Sleeper notes early on in the crowds that surround him suggest that this fraternization has rendered the Asian more Occidental than otherwise.

The integrity of language is again important in this Wells novel, and again the protagonist is concerned with the alteration of the language at the hands of lesser speakers. English has been corrupted almost beyond recognition by other dialects. Graham and the people of the twenty-second century have a difficult time understanding one another's accents, but it is not until the overthrow of the Council that we learn why; the language, at least to the Sleeper's Victorian ear, has been adulterated by non-English influences. Graham doubts whether what he hears in the street is English at all: "Scraps floated to him, scraps like Pigeon [sic] English, like negro dialect, blurred and mangled distortions" (119).

The notion of corruption as a result of Empire becomes more clear as the specter of racial warfare is raised and the anxiety about race, like the uneasiness about impotence and estrangement, reflects an apprehension about change and social reform.¹² Where Asians are thought, in Asano's words, to be "white men after all,"

¹² Bigotry and anxiety about lost position and characters that embody these characteristics exist in the other works studied as well. Such characters, with their closed attitudes about social class, race, and gender, like the evil Lord Westray in

Africans continue to be exploited by the new Empires of both the Council and Ostrog. The mere mention of the "black police" called in from the African continent to maintain order generates fearful obedience. Graham articulates to Helen what he sees as the consequences of nineteenth-century British Imperialism: "These blacks are savages, ruled by force, used as force. And they have been under the rule of the whites two hundred years. Is it not a race quarrel? The race sinned -- and the race pays" (269).¹³

An anxiety of gender operates in *Sleeper* just as it does in *The Time Machine* with its representations of the girlish, feeble Eloi and the brutish, hyper-masculinized Morlocks. Once again, feminine characteristics are associated with weakness or ineffectuality when the "real" men of both the Sleeper's Council and of the rebel leadership encourage their weaker upper and middle class brothers to frequent Pleasure

Glorianna, or the thick-headed Emperor in *Mercia*, or the comic figure of Augustus Fitz-Musius huffing and puffing about the "respect" due him in *New Amazonia* are in this sense representations of the anxiety about change inherent in any vision of a changed future. However, rather than functioning on the margins as the villain or the comic relief of the piece, Graham and the anxieties he embodies are at the center of *Sleeper*.

¹³ Patrick Parrinder has suggested another way of thinking about colonization in Wells that places his heroes in a more vexed and defensive position. Wells, a self-proclaimed "citizen of the world" nonetheless positioned himself as aggressive colonizer, reflecting in his fiction "[t]he destruction which many emigrants must have wished on the homelands they were leaving." Parrinder observes that in Wells's best fiction there is a "prophetic sense of otherness superimposed on Englishness, of an old world . . . giving way to an imagined new one" ("Utopia and Meta-Utopia" 95).

Cities and dance halls, where they live out their days in childless dissipation (207).¹⁴

This way, they stay out of the reproductive chain and out of the way. Graham himself feels a distaste for these men of the future, aligning himself with the "real men" who rule. When Graham and Asano visit a dance hall on the eve of a national holiday, Graham rather contemptuously notes that the

hair of the men was often a mass of effeminate curls, their chins were always shaven, and many of them had flushed or coloured cheeks. Many of the women were very pretty, and all were dressed with elaborate coquetry (226).

As with the Eloi, differences between the genders are becoming blurred.

The Sleeper awakens to the future to find that his century's worst suspicions about the character, temper, and morality of womankind have proven true. Because their "true" biological role has been diminished by progress, women have lost purpose in the twenty-second century and have become painted chatterboxes. Women are either icons of sin or redemption. They are the prostitutes of the Pleasure Cities and the unfit mothers who give birth and then abandon their children to the State or, in the case of rebel leader Ostrog's niece Helen, a beacon of inspiration to lead a hero like

¹⁴ These Pleasure Cities are described by Ostrog as the "excretory organs of the State" where the decadent rich "have their time, they die childless, all the pretty silly lascivious women die childless, and mankind is the better" (208). Note too in this sentence, *they* apparently is not gender neutral: men clearly occupy the subject position in this vision of Wells's, since women must be named.

Graham to great deeds. The profound anxiety about the notion that women may gain control, power, or autonomy leads to profound inconsistencies in the representations of women in *Sleeper*. The very kinds of changes that *fin-de-siècle* feminists advocated--suffrage and social, personal, and financial autonomy--are the changes that apparently have wrought such an unsatisfactory future. This future is, in a twisted way, woman's fault, and in each representation of woman's position in the twenty-second century, the vision of what will come from suffrage and sexual freedom is quite different from the vision of Corbett, Mears, Dixie, or Morris.

In the twenty-second century, the Victorian household has disappeared, eliminating the need for woman as household manager, and London now appears to be a giant hotel, with people coming together for communal meals, communal entertainment, and communal sleeping arrangements (216). Worse, Victorian motherhood has also disappeared. To Graham's dismay, these women no longer supply their children with the "moral and mental education" nineteenth-century women provided as part of their maternal duty (227). Women bear, but do not rear, children. Newborns are put in the care of State-run nurseries. Just as the Time Traveller is first dismayed, then fatalistic, about the world he finds in 802,701, Graham is initially troubled by this information but soon rationalizes that "[r]estraint, soberness, the matured thought, the unselfish act [that constituted conventional motherhood], are the necessities of the barbarous state" (228) but no longer appropriate for this society. It is with more than a trace of masculinist irony that the Time Traveller and Graham

note that the cornerstones of much Victorian moral ideology appear, in the future, to have been the result of "barbaric times."

It seems that women are to blame for this sad state of affairs on more than one front. Because they have abdicated the roles of caregiver and domestic angel, the moral fiber of the age has decayed. At the same time, married women's property rights are oddly responsible for the corrupt Empire that has arisen. While Graham is shocked by the demise of the nuclear Victorian family, the growth of his empire is indirectly attributed to the fact that Graham and the executors of his estate were not family men. The Council that rules in Graham's name is successful because the threat that an heir might lay claim to the childless Graham's fortune is eliminated. Further, because Graham had no family, there is no chance that the fortune will be lost through an unwise marriage. There is no chance of an inheritance battle that might "fling a huge fragment of . . . resources to a minor, a woman, or a fool," thus alienating "hundreds of thousands [in resources] at one blow" as a consequence of marriage or an ill-conceived legacy (151). In this way, wealth becomes peculiarly masculine with a life of its own, existing only to perpetuate itself, not to benefit families or humankind. The absence of a woman's presence in this case allows wealth to grow untroubled by family divisions and bickering--and presumably the growth of wealth is good, as Graham is gratified to learn that he "owns" the world. Yet the absence of "feminine" influence in the future has led to a fine mess. Thus, in creating this future world, Wells has realized two of the greatest anxieties about changing women's roles. Women have been freed from the role of caretaker and domestic manager on the one

hand in this future society, and the possibility of women's involvement in financial affairs is alluded to on the other.¹⁵

The only hope for womankind in the future, apparently, is to inspire their men to do the right thing. For example, Helen remains a mysterious figure who appears only to shore up the Sleeper's failing faith in humankind and nineteenth-century values. There is a suggestion that, in the margins of the novel, Helen has a life and a purpose, but for the Victorian Graham, her function is passive. Like a good Victorian

¹⁵ The Council's fear of "minors, women, and fools" echoes debate in the latter nineteenth century over the appropriateness of women's rights, given that the protection offered to "women, children, and idiots" would be compromised by strong women's rights. Suffragist and utopian Frances Power Cobbe wrote a scathing criticism of this sentiment in an 1869 political tract entitled "Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors: Is the Classification Sound? A Discussion on the Laws Concerning the Property of Married Women." In this tract, Cobbe writes:

"to a woman herself who is aware that she has never committed a crime; who fondly believes that she is not an idiot; and who is alas! only too sure that she is no longer a minor,--there naturally appears some incongruity in placing her . . . in an association wherein otherwise she would scarcely be likely to find herself" (5).

She also writes that while it isn't "pleasant" to be told outright by a man that women are morally, physically and intellectually inferior, it is preferable the treatment of the hypocrite who "professes to adore [women] as so many wingless angels, and privately values them as so many dolls" (6).

The Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 gave married women the right to treat their property as their own, but the propriety of this liberty was occasion for some debate.

woman, Helen knows when to modestly step back from the limelight for the good of her man. Unlike Ellen in *News from Nowhere*, Helen does not aspire to great deeds: she lives instead to inspire the Sleeper, even though she is apparently the "insider" who finds out that Ostrog plans to employ the "black police" to keep order. She heroically warns the people of London of the impending danger, providing the catalyst they need to stand for their rights. A key moment comes near the end of the novel, when Graham is back in the relative safety of the counter-revolutionaries who want neither the Council or Ostrog to rule them. Helen walks into the great hall to a hero's welcome as a strategy session is in progress. All activity stops as she approaches, and she enters to a "riot of applause" (261). Once she arrives thus, however, her role is reduced to dissipating Graham's "doubts and questionings" and "transfiguring" his pessimistic thoughts, not through advice and counsel, but by being present (262). When Graham, complaining of inaction during the great battle for control of London, is convinced by others that he must remain safely inactive because his "presence" may be needed, it seems "a matter of course to [him] that Helen should stop with him" (265).

The exaggerated indeterminacy of the novel in the end defeats it. The uncertain ending simply mirrors the uncertainty and anxiety that has shaped the entire text. The outcome of Graham's final act of (apparent) self-sacrifice is left unclear. Graham, who has learned to fly, takes an aeroplane into the skies to shoot down the huge air busses containing the feared black police. He is evidently successful in buying time for the defenders of London to destroy the landing platforms, making it

impossible to land the huge flying machines. The novel ends, however, not with Graham's triumphant return to London and a newly empowered working class, not with an inexplicable return to the nineteenth century and the realization that this has all been a dream vision, but with one final indeterminacy. The last lines in the novel see Graham plunging to earth, his plane destroyed, but the narrative stops short of the Sleeper's death, ending with: "Although he could not look at it, he was suddenly aware that the earth was very near" (288). The Sleeper's experiences in the future end as do many dreams of anxiety, with the uncertainty and fears of the subconscious unabated.

If *Sleeper* is one of the least studied of Wells's scientific romances, then the 1898 *War of the Worlds* is surely the most examined. Of the texts discussed here, *War of the Worlds* most clearly departs from prophetic conventions with the introduction of the Martians into familiar English society. Where *Time Machine* and *Sleeper* depict a journey into the future of the world, *War of the Worlds* brings the future, with attendant anxieties about gender, science, and Imperialism, to *fin-de-siècle* England. Yet because, as Hughes and Geduld note in their introduction to the 1993 critical edition of *War*, the Martians are at the "end of history" (19), their invasion of southern England brings the consequences of colonialism, Imperialism, and technological superiority "home" to English soil (20). Even though the conventions have been altered, this invasion can be read as prophetic just as surely as *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*. *War of the Worlds* can be read as a tale of

invasion from the perspective of the colonized,¹⁶ and in its analysis of the breakdown of society and the consequences of human arrogance and folly it is very much a projection of England's future.

Wells's practice of estranging his protagonist from both within and without the discovered future culture continues in *War of the Worlds*. The narrator is estranged, detached, alone through most of the novel. He is left to his own devices to speculate, as are the Time Traveller and the Sleeper, on the events that unfold before him. Once again, there is no ideologue or even a friendly, disinterested Martian to explain custom and intent to him. The indeterminacy of *Sleeper* and the sense of alienation from nineteenth-century culture as well as future culture of *The Time Machine* come together in *War of the Worlds* to create a narrator who, having seen the consequences of modern British life reflected in the pure intellect and scientific prowess of the Martians, never feels comfortable or safe in a familiar environment again. Although the Martians die in the end, the people of England can only speculate as to what has killed them. The narrator knows that some kind of earth bacteria has killed and so defeated the invaders, but how or why, or even what, is inevitably unexplained and unexplainable.

The narrator of *War of the Worlds*, like the Time Traveller, is never named; he is marked by a sense of estrangement from the beginning of his strange narrative, yet

¹⁶ Hughes and Geduld discuss the broad theme of Imperialism in *War of the Worlds* in their introduction to the 1993 critical edition of the text (31).

he is also apparently an unremarkable specimen of the British middle-class, the sort of man who habitually goes down to the train station in the evening to fetch the papers.¹⁷ It is almost as if his very sense of distance from the culture he is a part of makes him the most suitable person to pass this ultimate story of estrangement on to the reader. He acknowledges that he is "[p]erhaps a man of exceptional moods. . . . At times I suffer from the strangest sense of detachment from myself and the world about me, I seem to watch it all from the outside . . . out of time, out of space . . ." (72).

The overwhelming images of *War of the Worlds* are those of detachment and of dethronement. *War of the Worlds* is the ultimate expression of anxiety about the fall of humankind but even more specifically, it concerns an anxiety about the dissolution of British life. Once again, a male protagonist sees a culture in which he enjoys the privilege of power upended and finds himself displaced and estranged. There are countless analogies of man's relationship to the Martians, each giving the sense of man's insignificance and the insignificant futility of man's actions. Men are likened

¹⁷ No one has a name in this narrative. The narrator refers to people by their relation to him, or their function: there is "my wife," "my brother," the curate, and the landlord. As in *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, these unnamed characters seem distant and almost allegorical.

over and over again to inferior animals and insects,¹⁸ and the invasion itself brings to the narrator's mind the consequences of Imperialism.

As a metaphor for Imperialism, *War of the Worlds* suggests that the fates of those species and races oppressed by England will be mirrored in the fate of England itself. Darwinian, yes, as many readers of Wells have noted, but also suggestive of man's due return for the arrogance with which he has "ruled" the earth. Early in the story, the narrator muses that

[t]he Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit? (52)

The hubris of Englishmen is invoked again later, when the narrator, having dinner with his wife at the beginning of the invasion, confidently denounces "the short-sighted timidity of the Martians" and expresses certainty that a "shell in the pit . . . will kill them all." In retrospect, he ruefully invokes the extermination of the dodo bird by man and mocks his own gentility, implying that humanity is to the Martians as the dodo was to seventeenth-century sailors who wiped out their population in the relatively short space of fifty years: "So some respectable dodo in the Mauritius might

¹⁸ In the notes to Book II, chapter 6, Hughes and Geduld observe that humanity in *War of the Worlds* is compared alternately to dodos, microbes, deer, sheep, cattle, frogs, bees, wasps, rabbits, rats, ants, sparrows, and oxen (220).

have lorded it in his nest, and discussed the arrival of that shipful of pitiless sailors in want of animal food. ‘We will peck them to death to-morrow, my dear’” (73). A similar, more disturbing, metaphor occurs several pages later, as the narrator, along with the rest of southern England, realizes the danger. The narrator has obtained a horse and cart from an innkeeper who is “quite unaware” of the impending danger (80). He uses the cart to take his wife to the relative safety of Leatherhead. On his way back, he unwittingly heads directly toward attacking Martians. When he realizes his peril, he wrenches the horse’s head to the right, capsizing his dog-cart and breaking the horse’s neck (84). As he makes his way back to the village he comes upon a body left in the Martian’s wake, remarking “I stooped and turned him over to feel for his heart. He was quite dead. *Apparently his neck had been broken*... . It was the landlord of the Spotted Dog, whose conveyance I had taken” (86, emphasis mine).

The textual proximity of these incidents, the similar fate of the horse and the landlord, and the narrator’s part in both deaths, implies a parallel that shortens the distance between human and animal. Like the metaphor of the dodo and the Time Traveller’s theorizing about the society of the Eloi and the Morlocks, the deaths of the horse and the landlord suggest a kind of evolutionary cycle, but they also suggest that humanity will reap what it has sown in the natural world sooner or later.

The contrast between the ordinary and the extraordinary conditions contributes to the narrator’s sense of unreality and to the reader’s sense that the most horrible thing about this invasion is its disruption of cherished normalcy, of a hallowed social order. After witnessing the first attack of the Martians on humans, the narrator flees,

remembering "nothing" of his flight (71). He collapses half-conscious by the wayside.

only to find

[m]y terror had fallen from me like a garment. My hat had gone, and my collar had burst away from its fastener. . . it was as if something turned over, and the point of view altered abruptly. There was no sensible transition from one state of mind to the other. I was immediately the self of every day again--a decent, ordinary citizen (71).

During this brief respite from terror, the narrator goes home to his wife and finds himself emboldened by the familiar: "With wine and food, the confidence of my own table, and the necessity of reassuring my wife, I grew by insensible degrees courageous and secure" (73). The narrator himself finds it "extraordinary" that the "commonplace habits" of life could dovetail so completely with the "beginnings of the series of events that was to topple that social order headlong" (74). The complacency of humanity and the apparently baseless faith that the future would inevitably mean forward growth for man uncovered by the Time Traveller and the Sleeper reveals itself to the narrator in *War of the Worlds* as well. Because it is inconceivable to most that any force could overpower England, the time is ripe for such a conquest. Indeed the general feeling the first few days of the invasion is that "the authorities were to blame for their incapacity to dispose of the invaders without [the] inconvenience" and disruption of displacement and flight (111). The most unthinkable occurrence of all happens three days following the arrival of the Martians. The city of London, the "greatest city in the world", is in disarray, with a "stream of flight rising swiftly to a

torrent, lashing in a foaming tumult round the railway stations" and "even the railway organisations, were losing coherency, losing shape and efficiency, guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body" (121). Civilization and social order have become completely fluid.

Because of the narrator's uneasiness about change, he looks to the conventions of everyday life--like afternoon tea--for reassurance that he is all right. Conversely, the evidence for the narrator, and his unnamed brother, who functions as a second narrator, that order is shattered is similarly in small things. The fabric of civilization tears so easily. The brother's participation in the sacking of a cycle shop in London is described casually (122). When the narrator's brother gives directions to a wild-eyed young man, the young man sets off "without the formality of thanks" (125). The terrified mobs begin to "realise the urgent need of provisions. As they grew hungry the rights of property ceased to be regarded" (132) and it quickly becomes every property owner for himself. When the narrative shifts back to the first narrator, travelling with a terrified curate in the village of Sheen, normalcy has become bizarre. The fifth Martian cylinder crashes into the house they are hiding in and imprisons them. When day breaks and they are able to see the damage done, the incongruity of the scene impresses the narrator:

The floor was littered with smashed hardware; the end of the kitchen towards the house was broken into, and since the daylight shone in there, it was evident the greater part of the house had collapsed. Contrasting vividly with this ruin was the neat dresser, stained in the fashion, pale green (145).

The narrator's estrangement is acute near the end of the novel. He has been imprisoned in the destroyed house in Sheen for two weeks with the Martians literally just outside the wreckage. The curate has died, and the narrator is delirious with hunger and fear. Suddenly realizing that an eerie quiet has settled over the pit, he ventures out to find no sign of living Martians. He does find a landscape totally alienated. A red Martian weed has taken hold without leaving "a solitary terrestrial growth" in sight (163). He is not prepared for what he sees:

"I had not realized what had been happening to the world, had not anticipated this startling vision of unfamiliar things. I had expected to see Sheen in ruins--I found about the landscape, weird and lurid, of another planet" (165).

The physical estrangement of the landscape mirrors the estrangement of civilization and the social order that has taken place while the narrator has been trapped in the Martian pit. As he walks through the ravaged countryside, he sees no sign of humanity. He begins to suspect that "mankind had been swept out of existence" and that he is indeed "the last man left alive" (167), but of course, he is not. He meets an artilleryman with a survivalist's instinct. This soldier outlines the future of civilization and the future of humanity for the narrator:

Cities, nations, civilisation, progress--it's all over. That games's up. . . .

There won't be any more blessed concerts for a million years or so, there won't be any Royal Academy of Arts, and no nice little feeds at restaurants (173).

In spite of this bleak projection, the artilleryman is "grim set on living" without being "caught . . . and tamed and fattened and bred like a thundering ox" (173). Fortunately, the soldier's forecast about humanity's future does not work out in quite this way, but the sense of unreal estrangement comes in a revelation at the end of the novel. The narrator reveals that there is another species of Martian, a man-like species, about six feet tall, biped, with erect heads (151) that the Martians brought as "provisions" thus explaining the Martian preference for men as food.

In the end it is not the resistance of humanity that defeats the Martians; it is their own lack of biological resistance--some sort of terrestrial bacteria ultimately overthrows them. The narrator admits that no one is entirely sure what did kill the Martians. In an interesting reversal of real Imperialism, rather than disease brought to the colonies by "invaders," in this case, it is a native virus that kills the colonists.

Uncertainty upon uncertainty builds for the narrator. Why did the Martians come? Why did they choose Earth? How did their advanced technology work? Were they operating under any kind of moral/ethical system? Did they send messages back to Mars? What killed them? Will they return? These questions remain unanswered and unanswerable at the end of the novel. Indeed, the final question seems to be the ultimate anxiety for the narrator and the English. This relentless uncertainty is mitigated only by the demonstration of British naval power that leads to the only clear

human defeat of the Martians. Wells takes the sea battle that accounts for the only deliberate destruction of a Martian war machine as an opportunity to celebrate the display of force that is in fact the only certainty.

In the scene describing this destruction at the end of Book I, the narrator's brother has procured passage on a steamer to leave the coast of Britain. As the boat, along with countless other frantic vessels, rushes away from shore, three Martians in war machines give chase into the sea. Suddenly, the narrator's brother is knocked down by the steamer's hard about maneuver. What he sees when he regains his stance is the "torpedo-ram *Thunder Child*, steaming headlong, coming to the rescue of the threatened shipping" (135). This "charging leviathan" rushes at the Martians full speed ahead and, in spite of being crippled by their devastating heat-ray, the *Thunder Child* cuts the nearest Martian down. The captain of the steamer yells "inarticulately" and the passenger's shout in response, then they shout again because they see that the *Thunder Child* is still steaming, and heading "straight for a second Martian" (136). Set afire by a second blast of the heat-ray, the *Thunder Child's* "flaming wreckage" drives forward into the second Martian and crumples it "like a thing of card-board" (137). The captain shouts "Two!" and the "whole steamer from end to end rang with frantic cheering that was taken up . . . by all in the crowding multitude of ships and boats" heading out to sea (137). For a brief moment, English spunk, tenacity, and fire power have held the upper hand, and those watching from the ships revel in that moment. It is the only time in the story that human beings actively triumph over this passionless adversary, and it is fitting that this one victory, this one certainty comes by way of

such a symbol of British Imperial superiority. The glimmer of hope and optimism at the end of Book I gives way to the narrator's despair and isolation in Book II. The narrator experiences almost total estrangement from all that is familiar throughout Book II, and even when he emerges from his fifteen-day imprisonment to find that the Martians are apparently all dead, he feels uneasy. The sudden inexplicable nature of the Martian's defeat leaves him apprehensive.

Even after things return to normal, the narrator's sense of estrangement persists. He admits that there is not "nearly enough attention" paid to the possibility of another attack and he is constantly anxious, anticipating a "renewal of [the Martian] adventure" (192). For the narrator and others, the earth is no longer "a secure abiding-place for Man" and commonly held views of "the human future must be greatly modified by these events" (192). More importantly, "reality" to the narrator almost seems to have shifted to the time of siege, and the present peaceful present takes on the aura of unreality. He concludes:

I go to London and see the busy multitudes in Fleet Street and the Strand, and it comes across my mind that they are but the ghosts of the past, haunting the streets that I have seen silent and wretched, going to and fro, phantasms in a dead city, the mockery of life in a galvanised body" (193).

The novel closes, as do *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, with a final uncertainty. The narrator also sees both himself and his wife, who has also miraculously survived, as ghosts, musing that "strangest of all is it to hold my wife's

hand again, and to think that I have counted her, and that she has counted me. among the dead" (193).

The overwhelming fear of *War of the Worlds* is the fear that, not only are man's days at the top of the pecking order limited, but that England's days are similarly numbered. The rousing sea battle at the end of Book I between England's navy and the Martians suggests a nationalism that operates in tandem with an anxiety about the fall of Empire and the fall of white men as the custodians of civilization. The uncertainty the narrator feels throughout the end of the tale is tempered only by the display of force that affords the humans their one clear victory over the Martians.

In *War of the Worlds*, life as the narrator knows it is shaken to its core. The same can be said of the lives of the narrators and protagonists of *News from Nowhere*, *New Amazonia*, *Glorianna*, and *Mercia*, but their response, as they move in from the margins to the center, is a far more hopeful and optimistic one than the Time Traveller, the Sleeper, and the narrator of *War of the Worlds* can imagine. The three scientific romances of H. G. Wells's examined here reflect a fear and trepidation in the dominant English culture about change and its possible effects. The perspective of Wells's heroes, unlike the heroes of Morris, Dixie, Corbett, Mears, and even Bramston, is from the center of the existing culture, and a reimagining of that culture can lead only to anxiety and dread to their minds. If one is pushed from the center to the margins, the margins become a terrifying place indeed.

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CHAPTER V
BEYOND THE FUTURE

. . . ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely, their configurations of power, also being studied (5).

. . . Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien (207).

Edward Said in *Orientalism*

I

Utopia--the perfect society--was not one place at the end of nineteenth century, but many. Questions about the boundaries and definition of Utopia are not easily or succinctly answered. How were boundaries drawn? Often, the boundaries shift while the methods of drawing them remain the same. In what ways did Utopia resemble nineteenth-century England and in what ways did it differ? Was the energy generated by the prospect of change a positive or negative social force?

The discourses of Imperialism, capitalism, and science, in the many Utopias that came out in the last decade of the nineteenth century were familiar ones appropriated by what Said termed the "lamentably alien" to help readers reimagine a more equitable society. At the same time, these discourses were employed to estrange

a dominant Victorian culture that excluded women, the working classes and colonized Others.

The implied hope for a better future inherent in the fiction of Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett, Florence Dixie, Amelia Mears, and William Morris at the end of the century depends on redefining these discourses of power so that the logic of the dominant culture is turned against itself. The regenerative "newness" that Holbrook Jackson notes means that new definitions for old ideas must emerge (19). The "struggle to imagine the desired or beloved community" (Beetham 91) was waged in the rhetoric that defined New as both regenerative and degenerative.

Said has argued in *Orientalism* that understanding the role of power relationships in the representation of a culture or a part of a culture is critical to understanding nineteenth-century conceptions of race, gender, and class (7). Although Said is particularly concerned with the concept of the Orient in Western society, it can be argued that all marginalized, relatively powerless groups within the British Empire--non-white, female, and poor alike--both submitted to and resisted being made "Other." Representations of women and the working classes in the English imagination bore a strong resemblance to representations of non-whites whenever women and workers were characterized by more powerful white, middle- and upper-class men.

Conversely, when these "alien" groups in English society assumed themselves the discourses of cultural authority in *fin-de-siècle* utopian literature, the

(self)representation of those groups significantly changed their marginal status. Just as the "[s]ocio-economic and political institutions" of Western Imperialism enabled the creation of the Orient (Said 6), so the discourses of capitalism and science "created" ideas about working classes, women, and non-English members of the Empire. Ideas about wealth and the marketplace effectively helped to construct a less powerful place in society for the working classes. Similarly, the authority of science worked to rank white Englishmen at the top of the biological and evolutionary ladder, while women and non-whites, along with the working classes, were lower. This scientifically sanctioned biological and genetic superiority made possible political and cultural superiority.

An important manifestation of this urge to regenerate is the instability of language. Disparate ideas about Utopia, civilization, "new" and "true" womanhood, science, and Empire all contributed to the "frenzy of name-calling" that signified an effort by diverse groups to represent themselves, even as the dominant culture sought to hold on to the privilege of representation itself (Beetham 94). In each of the utopias studied here, a different piece of conventional *fin-de-siècle* ideology is challenged and reconfigured.

Corbett in *New Amazonia*, Mears in *Mercia*, Bramston in "Island of Progress," Dixie in *Glorianna*, and Morris in *News from Nowhere* attempt to re-represent Empire, gender identity, scientific values, and capitalism in their texts. Wells, while acknowledging the possibility of change and the importance of class, race, and gender

present in other utopias, pulls back from change pessimistically because the narrative sensibility in his scientific romances is that of the conventional, dominant culture, and thus his protagonists have everything to lose and nothing to gain from a reconfiguration of society.

Corbett, in *New Amazonia*, and Mears in *Mercia*, transform ideas about colonization and science to make feminine empowerment the logical outcome of these practices. When the "oppressed" nation of Ireland is occupied by the Irish and women--two groups imagined to be genetically inferior to Anglo-Saxon men--the country flourishes. By allowing feminine voices to represent themselves as they tell the story of women and Ireland from their perspective, conventionally feminine values nurture a successful, equitable country and Irish folk crafts strengthen the economy beyond belief. The woes of Ireland and women in the late nineteenth century are represented as the outcome of English male dominance, and when the women of New Amazonia name themselves rather than submitting to being named, the culture succeeds against all apparent odds. In *Mercia's* England, women and society have progressed, but the dichotomy between masculine scientific values and intuitive feminine ones still requires the title character to choose between work and family. In this romance, Mears refigures the opposition between science and mysticism, between male and female, and finds that rather than working against one another, they can complement and complete one another. Once the protagonist realizes that love and faith do not negate scientific values, she thrives.

This representation of science from a feminine sensibility challenges both *fin-de-siècle* notions of "True" and "New" Womanhood because Mercia seeks to incorporate both the nurturing and the independent into her life. Tellingly, she cannot do this in England, but must relocate physically as well as psychically to an independent India. Thus, as in *New Amazonia*, a former colony takes on superior importance as a symbol of civilization when the representation shifts. Bramston's "Island of Progress" is included here to demonstrate that relocation alone does not make Utopia. Although relocation and re-representation of former colonies plays an important part in the creation of Utopia, as Bramston establishes, this relocation is important only in that it makes new ways of thinking, or reconfiguring, possible. To relocate without changing the power structure or the ways of representation is to shore up convention.

In *Glorianna* and *News from Nowhere* political and economic diction is reconfigured to represent the alien. For Dixie, cultural forces that conspire to keep women oppressed include the legal system as much as the economic system that keeps women dependent on men for money and power. Dixie does not question the value of influence, only the grounds upon which women are kept from having it. In her representations of strong, active, determined women, she challenges the logical fallacies in political rhetoric that say women cannot and should not hold power independently. By depicting Hector d'Estrange as successful in every way, she exposes the foolishness in disqualifying him solely because he is in fact female.

Morris in *News from Nowhere* also attributes the oppression of women to economic conditions. In his utopia, definitions of labor, love, and talent are reconfigured to create a society in which ability and talent are enough to make a man or a woman successful. His primary ideologue, Ellen, is the antithesis of nineteenth-century idealizations of woman, and as the spokeswoman for this new world, she represents herself to Guest as a new kind of human being.

The scientific romances of H. G. Wells employ similar rhetorical strategies to a very different end. *The Time Machine*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, and *The War of the Worlds* offer a more neurotic and pessimistic vision of change and the threat to English culture posed by any transformation of the identity of "other." Science, commerce and socialism, and Imperialism all remain at the center of cultural authority in the early fiction of Wells, but these cultural markers once again define the "lamentably alien" in Utopia (Said 207) rather than a society regenerated by a redefinition of their function. A positive effort to reconfigure the margins of society gives way to a darker vision that upholds the center of nineteenth-century culture and anticipates the anxieties of the early twentieth century. In the prophetic fiction of Wells, change is represented from the point-of-view of the dominant culture--white, middle-class men--and the future becomes a hostile, darkly exotic, profoundly different place. Because the social position of Wells's protagonists is more central to the existing culture of *fin-de-siècle* England, to move them to the margins of a new civilization is perceived, not as opportunity, but as threat.

Karl Marx saw the concept of "utopia" as hopelessly unattainable and separate from reality, but each of these utopians were firmly grounded in the culture they were trying to change. William Morris was a designer, craftsman, publisher, printer, poet, and translator as well as utopian novelist. Indeed, Morris's interest in the world around him was so lively and intense that when he died at the age of 58, the attending physician declared that he died simply from "being William Morris, and having done more work than most ten men" (qtd in Thompson 635). H. G. Wells was a prolific and outspoken writer on a wide variety of topics. The collected editions of his major works fills twenty-eight volumes; his first published works were biology texts. Florence Dixie was a travel writer, feminist, and member of a prominent aristocratic family. Elizabeth Corbett was a suffragist who wrote magazine articles, essays, non-utopian fiction as well as utopian fiction. It is important to remember that many late nineteenth-century utopians viewed their century through a range of lenses, and their view was far from narrow or fanciful. Because they understood the culture so clearly and complexly, they brought that understanding to their "perfect worlds." This understanding meant that the imagined world was very much the same, and very much different, from the familiar England. The first element exists so that the second can come into being.

This study begins a project to uncover and understand the lively, serious, and complex cultural dialogue in which these utopians engaged. Although the place of

Morris and Wells is established in the utopian fiction of the nineteenth century, the voices of other writers, some from the margins, some not, must be heard.

Although the practice of redefining the culture through language was effective for utopian writers, many social critics, female and male alike, exploited the same instabilities in cultural meaning that these utopians did. Regeneration came through renaming, and the borders of society were altered and expanded through language. Utopians and social critics at the end of the nineteenth century surveyed the consequences of high Victorian values and ideologies about power, superiority, and gender relationships and found that they could use the same language but imbue it with alternate meanings. This multiplicity of voices has been a major focus of this study. The similarity of ideology and rhetoric among novelists, poets, and essayists across the political spectrum is as revealing as the striking differences that grow out of different perspectives of representation. The strategies that led novelists like Corbett, Morris, and other liberal utopians to exploit multiple meanings were common across genres, even texts written from more conservative political positions. A variety of sources suggest a rich foundation for further study, lending depth to the context of nineteenth-century fiction and cultural studies. A representative overview of texts and authors follows.

II

Because utopian ideology permeated every facet of nineteenth-century culture, it also follows that works not explicitly utopian contain utopian themes and address

utopian solutions. Essayist Edward Carpenter, allegorist Olive Schreiner, and poet Elizabeth Elmy examine the possibility of utopian solutions across other genres.

Carpenter in his 1889 address *Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure* extends the metaphor of ownership to gender issues when he writes that the "conception of Private Property [has] . . . destroyed the ancient system of mother-right and inheritance through the female line, and turned woman into the property of man" (5). This statement implies that some far distant past was perhaps a more equitable era in gender relations even as it plays upon the multiple meanings of "property" and "inheritance." In Carpenter's view, woman's natural rights were more readily recognized before industrialism and capitalism made ownership a primary goal of modern society, and, for Carpenter, issues of ownership and socialist reform were the most compelling ones in his discussion. His illustration of the natural rights of women is merely a device to discuss the general malady of the "policemanised state" of civilization (6). While Carpenter's work is not technically a utopia, it does echo much of the socialist/utopian thinking so ably represented by William Morris in *News from Nowhere*. Like Morris, Carpenter appropriates the familiar discourse of capitalism and property to depict a modern poverty of the human spirit.

Carpenter's contention that there was once a "golden age" for women is challenged by feminists Olive Schreiner and Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, author of "Woman Free" mentioned in the Introduction. Schreiner and Elmy shared Carpenter's concern for the past and its implications for the future, but Schreiner in "Three Dreams

in a Desert" and Elmy in her poem "Woman Free" offer critiques of nineteenth-century gender relationships that are rooted, not in an idyllic past where "mother-right" reigned supreme, but in a less idealized, reimagined past. From their perspective, man's superior physical and economic strength and the necessity of gender specific tasks established the harmful precedents of male control and separate spheres that oppressed women in the late nineteenth century. Gender inequality, for Schreiner and Elmy, is the central feature of modern malaise, rather than an outgrowth. These writers imbue their work with a strong sense of past, present, and future, but unlike Carpenter and many other male socialist/utopian thinkers in the late nineteenth century, Schreiner and Elmy do not see the past as a better time for women.

Schreiner's allegory and Elmy's poem, along with the feminist utopian novelists discussed in this study, play deftly with issues of self-representation by women. The discourses of Imperialism and science, along with that of capitalism, are employed to reconfigure ideas about a woman's self. If anything, they redefine history as a long continuum of oppression and subjection of women. Their rhetorical strategies in "othering" the Victorians further illustrate the shift in representation that is at the heart of this study.

Schreiner's "Three Dreams in a Dessert," published in 1890 but written much earlier,¹ takes on an allegorical, almost Biblical tone that serves to characterize

¹ Schreiner indicates in a note to the 1890 edition of Dreams that "these Dreams are printed in the order in which they were written," suggested that "Three Dreams in a Desert," fifth in order of eleven dreams, was written some years earlier.

political and legal inequalities as moral and ethical flaws, while Elmy's 1883 poem suggests a historical context for the oppression of women that transcends conventional boundaries of culture, education, and race.

Schreiner's dream vision places gender equality at the very center of continued progress, and her allegorical language lends a biblical, and therefore moral-ethical, tone to her work. The cultural realities she cites as impacting women illustrate clearly the common points of rupture in late nineteenth-century discourse that later utopians wove into their fiction. Industry, scientific progress, and outdated ideas about the feminine sphere all influence the dreamer's "Three Dreams."

Elmy echoes Schreiner's denial of a "golden" past for women but even more directly attempts to shift meaning. She links women's subjection by "early man" to the injustices of the nineteenth century, with all its prejudices and misguided ideas about the female sex. Her concluding utopian vision is reminiscent of Schreiner's allegory in its assertion that man will never realize his full potential until woman is elevated as his legal, moral, intellectual, and political equal.

Elmy redefines ideas about Imperialism, science, education, and social conventions as she argues that woman's oppression is a systemic, culture-wide problem. Unlike utopian novels, which often imply cultural conflicts within the context of their fictional discourse, Elmy is direct about both the inconsistencies and disruptions she sees in the discourse of the nineteenth century. Rather than imagine a

world that is out of time or out of place, as conventional utopian novelists do, Elmy chooses to suggest her utopia by directly describing the ills in present society, implying that only when these ills are rectified will an ideal society be achieved.

Less idyllic than Schreiner, and more directly critical, Elmy, like Florence Dixie, seems to hope that by demonstrating that the roots of woman's oppression are to be rationally explained, she can convince rational readers that change is inevitable and necessary. Elmy, like Dixie and Amelia Garland Mears, is interested in reconfiguring conventional Victorian ideology about gender and cultural authority to convince her readers that previously held cultural and gender biases and prejudices do not hold up under careful scrutiny. Her strategy is to blur the distinctions between the "spheres" of work and home, science and emotion, masculine and feminine, and in challenging her middle-class audience's complacent imperialism.

Finally, the non-canonical works discussed in this study only scratch the surface of *fin-de-siècle* utopian literature. The Bodleian Library at Oxford University lists well over a hundred utopian and prophetic texts published in the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century. These texts include novels, satires, plays, and essays. The anxieties already noted about Empire, socialism, the woman question, and technology are present in each of these texts.

Fergus Hume's 1891 *The Year of the Miracle* is set in 1900 and describes London before, during, and after a plague of biblical proportions is released on an increasingly decadent and heartless population by a crazed, grief-stricken father. The

miracle of the title is apparently that the poorer, more susceptible classes were swept away by the plague and the "fittest" were left to rebuild London and "abolish disease, crime, and poverty" (148). A different kind of apocalyptic event is described in Le Queux Williams's *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894). In this tale, Europe declares war against England but in the end, England prevails and a new era of prosperity dawns for the Empire.

Interesting social and moral commentary emerges in Robert Buchanan's 1898 romance *The Rev. Annabell Lee, a Tale of Tomorrow*. This story is set in the twenty-first century, and, as in Wells's *Time Machine*, the future is idyllic and disease-free, but, like Bramston's vision in "Island of Progress," this a very irreligious age. Annabell is the last living Christian and as such is persecuted, but not before reawakening the Christian impulse in this future England. Kenneth Folingsby's 1888 *Meda: A Tale of the Future* casts its hero 3,000 years into a future England where the modern British people resemble, both in temperament and in appearance, Wells's all-brain, no-body, no-heart Martians. Our hero in this story likens his position in this enlightened society to that of a "pet dog" (266). The narrator in Miles L'Estrange's 1892 *What We Are Coming To* returns from a journey to Africa to an England inexplicably transported to the twentieth century. It is an over-regulated age with labor reforms, a six-hour work day, no pubs, and no domestic help for upper-class women. It is clearly dystopia.

These and other utopian texts reveal the liveliness of a debate that is often highly readable and thought-provoking. However, these texts will not fail to give students of the nineteenth century insight into the response at all levels of society to social concerns and cultural change.

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